■ News / A7
Marcos put millions in bikini model's firm, says report

■ Business Friday
Philippine advertising: Cannes or cannot do?

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Jericho-Kristine happy ending texters' choice

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Gov't to propose 2005 budget of P901B

■ World / A9
US moved uranium without UN approval

■ News / A2
Traders want tax on text, not on oil

SC orders Court of Appeals to review death row cases

By Philip C. Tubeo

In a landmark decision, the Supreme Court yesterday ruled that death penalty cases should be reviewed by the Court of Appeals before they are elevated to the high tribunal for final disposition.

Prior to yesterday's ruling, death penalty

>> full text/Philippines coverage

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Antismoking law not catching fire

By Blanche S. Rivera

Friday, July 9, 2004 ▲ 38 pages / vol. IV / no. 212 website: www.inq7.net

STOPPED from boarding his flight to Iraq on Thursday, this worker is one of 1,220 Filipinos affected by the government ban on deployment to that war-shattered country. Ban already, 400 workers left but evade.

RP driver faces beheading in Iraq

Kidnappers ask Manila to pull out its troops

By Julen Ludeg Jaculbia, Jerome Aning and Marvin F. Marfil

THE ABDUCTION of a Filipino by Iraqi militants is putting the new administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo to a showdown.

Department of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Gilberto Asuncion confirmed the identity of the Filipino hostage but said there were none at least four Angelo de la Cruzes in the passport records of the DFA or in the Philippine embassies in the Middle East.

"We are now matching the name Angelo de la Cruz with the photos we have in our records," Asuncion told reporters in a briefing at the DFA at 9:30 last night.

Cruz is reportedly a truck driver. His captors threatened to kill him unless the Philippine government withdraws its troops from Iraq within three days, according to Arab TV Al-Jazeera.

Rolando Dadayo, charge d'affaires of the Philippine Embassy in Baghdad, earlier confirmed the hostage's nationality on ABC. "This is a Filipino, this is a confirmed kidnapping situation."

Dadayo presumed no offer a thanksgiving Mass and a thanks-

THE IMAGE of Angelo de la Cruz was seen around the world from a videotape taken by Al-Jazeera TV which aired it on Wednesday. The banner behind reads Iraq Islamic Army—Khaled bin al-Waleed Corps.

After living in a palace, twins may have no home

By Dennis Nagasaki
PhilStar Overseas Bureau

CEBU CITY—After staying for almost seven months in a palace as guests of the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, twins Princess Hanan and Princess Rim and their mother Carina Blanco returned home to find they may have no roof over their heads.

The Manzos are among the 40 families tracked by soldiers in their barangay.

The Manzo family pleaded to the Wednesday from Saudi Arabia where the conjoined twins were successfully separated, thanks to the generosity of Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz al-Saud.

At the instructions of the prince, Carina, her husband Dominador and the twins were billeted in a five-star hotel in Makati City before flying on to their hometown of Mandaue City, Cebu.

A rousing welcome from relatives, friends, neighbors and the local officials of Barangay Opao awaited by Barangay Captain Josefa "Joy" Chester granted the Manzo family at the Mactan Cebu International Airport at around 4:15 p.m.

Carina promised to offer a thanksgiving Mass and a thanks-

Loose guns rise to half-million

By Christian V. Esguerra and Luige del Puerto
Inquirer

THE NUMBER of "loose" or unlicensed firearms has ballooned over the past 10 years, and police officials have tagged bureaucratic red tape among the culprits.

Some 800,000 guns are registered in the country, according to Philippine National Police records, but the number of unlicensed firearms has gone as high as 1.3 million over the last decade, on top of the estimated 200,000 guns whose owners had failed to renew their licenses since last year, for a total of some 1.52 million.

As a result, the PNP leadership is now hard-pressed to recover the loose arms and have all the registered firearms renewed very soon, according to Chief Supt. Arturo Lomibao, Chief Security Group-designate.

A total of 13,754 guns were reported in criminal cases from 1995 to May this year. Of this total, 11,815 were unlicensed while only 1,939 were licensed.

"It means that there's always the danger of these loose firearms being used in a crime because logic tells us that someone must own up to them somebody would not use a licensed gun," Senior Supt. Arturo Lomibao, chief of the Firearms and Explosives Division (FEU), explained.

The FEU considered the PNP's

GMA support crucial to Senate presidency fight

By Christine O. Avendaño

THOSE eyeing the Senate presidency will have to contend with the preference of President Macapagal-Arroyo for Franklin Drilon, the incumbent.

That's one factor that Sen. Manuel Villar and his supporters should consider seriously," opposition Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said yesterday in a phone interview.

Both Drilon and Villar have said the battle for the post is likely to be settled before the 14th Congress convenes on July 26.

But even if Malacañang had stayed that it would not intervene, Pimentel said Ms Arroyo was likely to do so "because she wants control of the Senate."

And she would prefer Drilon to remain as Senate President, Pimentel added.

Pimentel expressed the belief that Ms Arroyo had a "bias" for Drilon considering that the latter did "[other] favors" to her in the May elections.

Drilon hails from the area-rich province of Iloilo, where Ms Arroyo won by an overwhelming margin.

Pimentel said it was up to Villar to decide what to do about this.

For now, he said, the eight-member minority in the Senate was "waiting for developments to shape up more clearly."

He reiterated the hope of the minority to come up with a clear position on whom to back for the top post in the Senate.

GMA urged to slash pork barrel

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.
Inquirer
and Gemma B. Lucero
PhilStar Bureau

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo is stocking with her plan to cut the country's P900-billion 2005 budget by P10 billion to P20 billion, but other sectors are also urging her to slash the gigantic pork barrel of lawmakers to further reduce the budget deficit.

The pork barrel is estimated to reach P6-billion this year.

Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri yesterday said the Arroyo administration was going ahead with its plan to shift from an income to gross income taxation, which is expected to generate P58 billion in additional revenues yearly.

"The whole rationale [of the gross income tax] is to avoid [an always-elusive] the state ends up subsidizing [weak enjoyment of] rich people," Neri told Palace reporters.

In another forum, however, Senate Finance Secretary Jesus Estanislao said the government must not only scrap the tax perks enjoyed by big corporations but also the billions in pork barrel

Cabinet turns to humor, prayer amid fiscal crisis

By Julen Ludeg Jaculbia

STRAPPED for funds but not bereft of humor, President Macapagal-Arroyo and her Cabinet yesterday turned to prayer and self-parody in the face of a looming fiscal crisis.

"Lord God, we seek Your help in ensuring that the budget will balance before the President's term ends," Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin intoned as she led the prayer ahead of the Cabinet meeting in Malacañang.

During her June 30 inaugural, Ms Arroyo said a balanced budget would be one of her 10 legacies when she finish six years and ends in 2010. Since she took over from ousted President Joseph Estrada in 2001, Ms Arroyo has had a hard time matching mounting state expenditures with dwindling government revenues.

"We pray for enlightenment for our legislators that they may see the light toward passing the new revenue measures we badly need and refrain from passing new spending laws we cannot fund," Boncodin said as Ms Arroyo and other Cabinet officials held back their laughter.

"We pray for understanding by government officials and employees, that they too always ask for sacrifices in favor of the interests of service to the general public," Boncodin added.

"We pray for the goodwill of our people, that they may pay their taxes honestly and see expert evidence from government all the time."

The budget secretary also prayed for perseverance and tra-

THE PRAYER of Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin put a smile on what otherwise might have been a tense Cabinet meeting due to the Do Castro-Bellmar situation.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

FRIDAY, JULY 9, 2004

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

Most traders prefer tax on text

By Gil C. Cabacungan

A GOVERNMENT plan to slap higher taxes on petroleum products rather than text-messaging has sparked a debate among business leaders, many of whom lamented the Arroyo administration's allegedly skewed economic priorities.

"I think the government should set its priorities right and decide what is more important in Philippines...fuel oil or texting," said information tech 5 Consultancy.

The Economic Monitoring Group, an advisory body to President Macapagal-Arroyo, on Thursday last Monday a proposal to levy an additional P2 per liter tax on petroleum products, which will bring P36 billion in revenues and immediately address the ballooning budget deficit, expected to hit P160 billion this year.

The EMG rejected a proposed 10 centavos-per-minute tax on the popular Filipino pastime of texting—sending messages by mobile phones— after a flood of protest from mobile phone users and providers.

Instead of taxing text messaging, the EMG is proposing that a franchise tax be imposed on telecommunication firms.

Given a choice between taxing texting or oil products, most business leaders came down hard on texting, which they considered a frivolous activity and a waste of time.

But Donald Dee, executive vice president of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, agreed with the EMG proposal. He said a tax on oil products now would be merely an would create oil prices are bound to fall in the next few months and thus create any price increases from the additional tax.

Dee said an oil tax would lead to a more efficient use of fuel while a tax on texting would immediately hit students and low-to-come families that depend on this cheap mode of communication.

Federation of Philippine Industries president Jesus Arranza however said taxing oil products would have a bigger "domino effect" because fuel price adjustments affect a broad range of economic activities, from manufacturing to transport to households.

Arranza, who proposes a graduated tax on text messaging, said the government could put a cap on tax-free text messaging to lessen the impact of the levy and impose discipline on the use of telecommunication facilities.

Francis Chua, executive vice president of the Federation of Philippine Chinese Chamber of Commerce, said that if the EMG had heeded the President's pro-poor agenda, it would propose to tax inviting rather than oil.

"If people are indeed poor, shouldn't they be spending more of their money for more basic needs like food, water, clothes and shelter rather than on sending jokes or chismis in text?" he said.

Miguel Varela, chair of Philippine Inc., said texting should be treated with more tenderness as it has become more of a way rather than a necessity.

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Joe de V not keen on being PM

By Carlos Pablo

DE VENECIA

SPEAKER Jose de Venecia Jr. yesterday said he has no desire to become the country's first Prime Minister, an ambition his critics accuse him of harboring because of his championing of Charter change and a shift to a parliamentary system.

"I don't want to become Prime Minister. Let the others become Prime Ministers," De Venecia said in a press conference.

"What I want is to simply leave a historic legacy for our country before I lose use of speech," said De Venecia who favors a parliamentary system in a federal form of government and has been at the forefront of Charter change moves since the 1990s.

"This is the last real hope for the Filipino people," he said.

In a parliamentary set-up, the Prime Minister is the head of government and is chosen by his colleagues (lawmakers who sit in the national assembly). This means he or she is not directly voted to office by the people.

A present committee and coalition builder, De Venecia is acknowledged even by his critics to be a politician almost without equal in mustering support from fellow legislators.

De Venecia's moves in organizing for the Arroyo camp a "Rainbow Coalition" of various political parties in the 12th Congress. He successfully put together similar coalitions in 1992, 1995, 1995-1998 and 2001-2004 as the House of Representatives.

Insiders in De Venecia opponents in the House were cut in precluding De Speaker's ministry.

"Speaker De Venecia is not keen on running for Prime Minister. In advocating for Charter change, he is not grooming for the premiership in a Cabinet government but for a place in history," said Rep. Rolando Andaya Jr. (Liberal Party, Camarines Sur).

Andaya's late politician father was one of De Venecia's closest friends allies. He said that De Venecia was "only after a government that can respond to the complex challenges the changing times bring."

Beyond personalities

"Charter change is beyond personalities. It will be pursued with the interest of future generations in mind, not the future careerists of some people," he said.

"It does not help the Charter debates any if the discourse is muddled by personal attacks. How often and for how should be lobbed around," he said.

Rep. Rodolfo Nograles (Lakas, Davao City) said De Venecia was not keen on becoming Prime Minister.

"You can they even draw the conclusion that Cha-cha is all about keeping people in power?" Nograles said.

Administration critics alleged that Charter change and the shift to a parliamentary federal system would allow both President Macapagal-Arroyo and De Venecia to cling to power indefinitely.

Nograles said the shift to a parliamentary system is effected in 2007, De Venecia has promised that the President serve as concurrent Prime Minister, starting from 2007 until her six-year term as President ends in 2010.

De Venecia made the proposal in a bid to make Mr. Arroyo stick to a supposed campaign promise that she was willing to serve as chairman and three-year term from 2004 to 2007 to effect a shift to a parliamentary federal system.

Nograles said it was "not fair to end malice on why President Arroyo and Speaker De Venecia are pushing for Charter change."

"They have proven their commitment to public service and they have nothing in mind but our national welfare. For once, we should unite and set aside this rush mentality so we can finally move forward as a country and as a people," he said.

IMF team asks GMA to use new mandate to be bold

By Doris C. Dumlao

A VISITING International Monetary Fund mission yesterday urged President Macapagal-Arroyo to use her fresh mandate to strike out with "bold" measures to cut down the public sector deficit, reform the debt-ridden power sector and boost the banking industry.

At a press conference at the end of a four-week post-program monitoring mission last night, IMF mission head Mandikhai Edwards said Mr. Arroyo should grab the "golden opportunity" to undertake reforms which had been difficult to implement in the past.

He said firm cracking efforts to consolidate the government's fiscal positions would boost investor confidence and reduce the costs of borrowing money.

The mission supported in particular a proposal to increase the excise taxes on "sin" products like alcohol and tobacco as well as on petroleum products, in addition to other new proposed tax measures.

But it urged the government to cut proposals for new tax exemptions, "given the harmful impact that exempted activities have on incentives for taxpayer compliance."

"The Philippine economy is at a crucial juncture. A renewed political mandate provides the administration with a clear opportunity to press ahead with much needed reforms to ensure macroeconomic stability while creating new opportunities to enhance employment and poverty," the mission said in a statement.

Edwards noted there was now "stronger momentum" to get crucial economic measures approved, although he declined to comment on initial on the merits of the new tax measures being studied by the administration.

Among others, the President is proposing that corporations be taxed on the basis of gross income instead of net profit, as is the current practice. This has been criticized by some tax experts as neither being equitable nor efficient.

The mission said raising revenue collections was critical in bringing the public sector deficit and debt to down manageable levels. "Public revenue is the key to boosting room for needed development expenditures."

It said significant tax policy measures should form the bedrock of this effort, complemented by strengthened tax administration.

Edwards noted that the government's economic team had proposed a "pretty strong" economic agenda.

"Now there's still a lot to be done in fleshing out the measures and getting congressional approvals," he said.

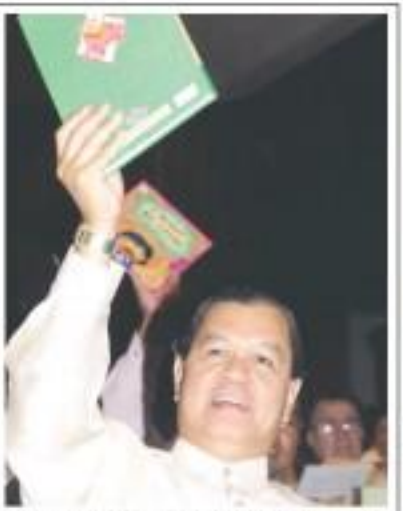
"The key thing is to convince the market that the government is really serious about budget consolidation... At this point, it is important to lay out a consistent package for the future to bolster confidence so that the market just expects excess this is going to risk and as a new start," he said.

Asked whether the mission agreed that the Philippines was in a fiscal crisis, Edwards said he would not use the term "crisis" but noted that the country needed to address its fiscal problem.

He said there were other factors supporting the country's economy like strong remittances from overseas Filipino workers.

The IMF called for greater private sector participation in the power sector in order to generate new investments and ensure adequate generation capacity over the medium term.

"The outlook for the sector has been clouded by large losses at NPC (National Power Corp.) which have contributed to high levels of overall public sector debt and increased commercial borrowing," the mission said.



VP AND CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
Vice President Noli de Castro cheers his book to be donated to children at yesterday's opening ceremonies of the Corporate Social Responsibility Week Expo at the Philippine International Convention Center. De Castro delivered the keynote speech during the opening of the Expo which runs until tomorrow. The Philippine Daily Inquirer is the event's media partner.

Fight not yet over, says Barbers

By Marvin P. Mayol

THE CAMP of former Sen. Robert Barbers yesterday said the Comelec en banc therefore declares denying Barbers' petition seeking to annul the proclamation of Sen. Rodolfo Biazon remained "final."

Barbers, who was narrowly defeated for the 12th Senate slot by party mate Biazon in the recent elections, yesterday filed a motion for reconsideration before the Comelec en banc.

He said the Comelec special division erred in dismissing his petition as it based its decision on the results of the municipal certificates of canvass.

If the provincial CoCs had been used, Barbers would win by 1,040 votes over Biazon, said Atty. Bel-Samora, Barbers' lawyer.

"They should have used the provincial COCs because these are the ones used in the ministerial canvass," he said.

The Special Division the other day issued a written resolution denying Barbers' bid to nullify the proclamation of Biazon. It said Biazon won over Barbers by 6,212 votes.

Barbers had asked the Comelec to annul the proclamation of Biazon because of 29,219 supposedly unaccounted votes and that special elections were still to be held in some areas.

SPORTS

Editor Teddyboy S. Philembre

TANQUINGCEN celebrates with his Gin Kings and their supporters.

Back as PBA pride and joy

By June Navarro

All Barangay Ginebra wanted was to work its way up and regain the respect the Gin Kings enjoyed in the past from the rest of the teams and their multitude of followers.

The Gin Kings turned get more than that by winning the Get Matador PBA Hora Conference crown at the expense of the Red Bull Barako Wednesday night.

"Honestly, we really don't have a goal in this conference. We just worked as a team and tried to improve our quality of play," said Ginebra coach Siot Tanquingcen.

But as opportunities started to trickle in, the Kings pounced on them and all their hard work finally bore fruit as they wrapped up the best-of-five series at 3-1 with a runaway 103-86 triumph over the Bankers.

"During the playoffs we saw that making the Final four was a possibility. When the playoffs came, our set a goal to reach the quarterfinals. In the semis, we did the same. From there, we built up everything going to the Finals," said Tanquingcen.

The Gin Kings were ranked ninth among 12 teams after finishing the eliminations round with an 8-11 record. In that time, the Kings were trying to adjust to Norman Briggs and groping under a new coach.

Tanquingcen had replaced Alex Cuidz as head coach, with the Kings holding a 3-3 card in the eliminations. Cuidz stepped in as team manager. Briggs became the third reinforcement al-

(MORE A2)

PSC support vital in POC elections

By Marc Anthony Reyes

WHOEVER gets the support of the Philippine Sports Commission will be unbeatable in the forthcoming Philippine Olympic Committee presidential race.

This was the no-holds-barred assessment of athletes chief Go Teng Kok of the Nonoming' polls pitting incumbent head Cojuc Tayag of Imeldaing against equestrian chief Jose "Peping" Cojuangco.

"I'm not saying that PSC will take sides, but eventually whoever has better relations with the government agency will have a definite edge," said Go, who is openly supporting Cojuangco's candidacy.

Though PSC chief Eric Buhain has been silent over the issue, he has had several differences with Tayag in the past. At the height of their feud early this year, the POC chief himself had to be reminded to

(MORE A2)

BASKETBALL: NBA Summer League: Sixers vs Pistons, 8 a.m. (9 p.m.); Celtics vs Pistons, 8 a.m. (9 p.m.); Celtics vs Nuggets, 10 a.m. (11 p.m.); Detroit vs Philadelphia in summer league action. Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

SPORTS TV Compiled by L. Mangaoil

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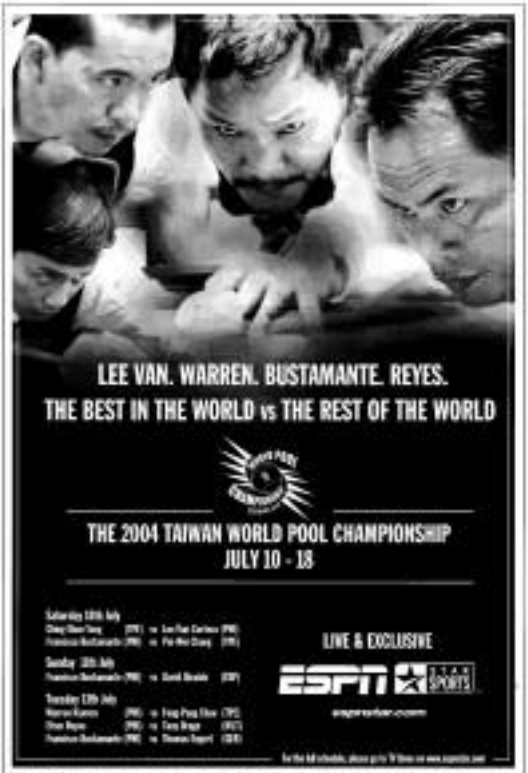

Stags out to break ice

Valenzona rues starters' forms, but vows first victory today

VICTORIAN Sans Sebastian Stags coach Tiers Valenzona is baffled by his team's poor start.

"Basically, the team is ready to play but fouls could hamper free-scoring Stags," he said. In the PBL, Jaw Raposa, Chris Bahaya and Michael Fermindez rewards ing (averaged last). "I don't understand," said Valenzona.

The Stags, last year's losing finalist still watches after two games in the current MCIA basketball season, again seek the elusive first win at 4 p.m. today against the Philippine Christian U Dolphins at the Rizal Coliseum.

Defending champion Letran battles Jose Rizal at 4 p.m.

The Knights and the Dolphins are tied for second at 2-1 with silver Perpetual Help. Mina. The Bombers have yoke in three outings.

The Stags' main men have been playing off tempo. Raposa, the reigning KEPP who recently averaged a double-double (19.9 ppg, 9 rpg) last year, failed to score in double digits in his last two outings. Gonzales, who teamed 10.9 points per game, now averages seven points a game.

Could these the team is relying on them. If they don't ring up, I have to make a point on some of my new players," said Valenzona, who sees rookies a ton of bugging a third straight championship last year.

The Bombers hope to get back in form after back-to-back losses to the first Bola Lions and Mapua Cardinals.

In junior play, the Baby Dolphins square off with the Staglets in the 11:30 a.m. opener, while the Squires and the Light Bombers collide at 6.

Jasmine B. Alipo

STANDINGS	W	L
Mapua	3	0
PCU	2	1
LyceUm	2	1
Perpetual	2	1
San Beda	2	1
JRU	1	2
SSC	1	2
Benilde	0	3

GAMES TODAY
(MOA Arena)
11:30 a.m.—SSC vs. Mapua
1 p.m.—PCU vs. SSC
(Rizal Coliseum)
4 p.m.—Philippine Christian U vs. Jose Rizal
4 p.m.—Letran vs. Perpetual Help
6 p.m.—LyceUm vs. San Beda
(Filoil Flying V Arena)
Curtain Raiser: JRU vs. Benilde

Spring seeks revenge vs Taguig today

YTA, CRUZ, Laguna—Spring Cooking Oil Laguna seeks to settle scores with Serrano Taguig today as North Division action of the NBC Division of Basketball Conference) championship recesses at the Laguna BIGG complex here.

Powered by an NBC Standard Rosary Speedster, Spring Laguna is set to average an 69.75 line.

Taguig in their first meeting. Spring Laguna led all the way to that match with Taguig additions Jr. Anthony Rabillas produced the winning basket in the waning seconds.

The squad of NBC president Nathaniel "Nat" Padilla and Laguna Gov. Teresita Lazaro is eighty favored over Mayor Freddie Tinga's Taguig cagers in the 8 p.m. clash.

Backing up Speedster roster are six-pro Cristian Cagulangan, Dominic Capobres, Rabillas, Rhodora and Jonathan Serrano, while Gerbin, former BU team point guard Ogie Gonzales and Eddy Gundarron hasten the Taguig squad.

The Sagpin-Cambiado pace the North Division with two-straight wins, followed by Taguig (1-1), Batangas (1-2) and Spring Laguna (0-1).

MAGICS join an exclamation point to having title in Ginebra's dreary Wednesday in this series of shots.

'I owe you one Ron'

By Francis Dalisay

THERE was still a tinge of emotion in his voice as the self-spoken Ginebra coach paid a quiet tribute to his acknowledged mentor yesterday.

"This—winning the championship—is all his deed," said Bethune "Ben" Tanquingcen with a smile.

The Kings mentor was referring to translucent tension Ron Jacobs, who is still recovering from a stroke.

"He was honest enough to let me realize that if I wanted an way in the PBA, I wouldn't be as a player. So he told me then, when I was still trying to decide to become a player, he left the door open for me. So, well, whatever happens, if things don't work out, I should come back to that [door]."

So after a session with the Barangays Dragons in the Metropolitan Basketball Association, Tanquingcen returned and found Jacobs still holding the door open for him. He later took up the assistant's job at San Miguel, after Jacobs moved to Cimfloa as consultant, before he was named Kings coach early in this current season.

"And many thanks for the fulfillment of his dream for me. I owe him a lot," Tanquingcen said.

Before The Finals, Tanquingcen visited Jacobs, who communicates through signals, and, seen through the glint in the eyes of his mentor that he was happy. Belatedly afternoon, he made another visit to the Jacobs home and saw a hint of a smile in the American's face.

"Thanks," was all the grateful Tanquingcen could utter.

CAGUIOA. His coaching turns into big games for Kings. —PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

PSC support vital ...

From page B1

Philanthropy center signed by 11 national sports association heads asking for Buhain's ouster from the government sports agency.

Cojuangco, on the other hand, is a former golf association president, like Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita, who happens to be Buhain's father-in-law.

Cojuangco and Go will join the 32 other SEA presidents who will face First Gentleman Mike Arroyo today to unveil Bermudez's capability of winning the overall title in the 2005 Southeast Asian Games.

Go said Cojuangco is all set to join the PSC race despite Duprit's offer to give him another position at the Olympic body.

"I think he (Cojuangco) can help (if) sports in another capacity which is free from politics and day to day responsibilities," Duprit said.

Go, known by Duprit in the last PSC elections, also disputed the POC chief's statement that it would be unwise to make drastic changes in the POC some 60 days before it plays host to prospective foes at least next year's SEA Games.

"It is by saying that he's the only one capable of leading the preparation for the SEA Games?" asked Go.

Duprit said consistency will be a big factor in the November polls considering that the country will be hosting the biennial event in just 16 months. In the POC head, he is also the chair of the Philippine SEAG Organizing Committee or Philsoc.

Back as PBA pride ...

From page B1

ter Powell Ellis and George Reyes.

Tanquingcen endured a tiresome season as Ginebra head coach before the Kings started to flash their never-say-die attitude as Stagga got into groove.

In the best-of-three semifinals against Talk 'N Text, Eric Menk, Jayjay Helterbrand, Andy Seigle and Stagga joined Cortez in bringing down the tall Tatlers. Arnold Honeycutt combination core as Mark Caguioa were his main bugs against Willie Miller.

"You don't know that last Mark made a big number by trying to fit into a team concept and we appreciated that," said Tanquingcen.

Tanquingcen also heaped praises on Seigle, Stagga and Menk, who earned the Best Player of the Conference and Finals MVP awards. He described the 6-foot-9 Seigle as the most underrated dominant in the league.

The 6-foot guard TF interview by Tanquingcen, the fourth rookie coach in PBA history to win a title after Joel Banal of Talk 'N Text, Chotiboole Ryan Gregorio and Chot Reyes, was about to end when he mentioned a player who contributed a lot for turning their fate around.

"I would say that the big difference was really Jayjay Helterbrand for stepping up in his role. He really matured. He may not have scored much but he was the key who held the team together," said Tanquingcen.

Helterbrand found playing time when Bal David got injured.

It was apparent that Ginebra's accomplishments came after Tanquingcen took over the helm.

"They (Caguioa and Tanquingcen) have different styles. It just as happened that coach Siot's style worked," said Caguioa.

Cacophony of old dictums

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

I TOLD friends days before the championship clash of Ginebra head Miguel Amold with Jim Mahadar Phoenix Construction owner for two reasons: Tanquingcen and the crowd.

That, when the Ginebra Kings finally nailed their first crown on Wednesday night via a 3-game to 1 conquest of San Miguel, giving coach-turned-head coach Bethune "Ben" Tanquingcen with a ring of eight years, I wasn't surprised one bit.

Never mind that Ginebra had a rookie coach in Eric Tanquingcen. In fact, I could, and likely envy a hoots of Ginebra as it accepted Siot's envy a hoots of Ginebra as it accepted Siot's envy a hoots of Ginebra as it accepted Siot's

'ABOMINABLE LIST OF LIES'

Joma twits GMA's 10-point plan

By Alcuin Papa

AN ABOMINABLE list of lies.

That was how National Democratic Front of the Philippines political consultant Jose Ma. Sison described the 10-point national program of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Sison denied he was supporting the President's agenda which she presented during her inauguration on June 30.

In a statement from Utrecht, the Netherlands, Sison said, "Information has reached me that propagandists of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo are spreading the ludicrous lie that I support her so-called 10-point agenda and in effect her rigged election.

Bankrupt

"The best way for me to respond to the incredible lie is to expose the fact that the so-called 10-point agenda is an abominable list of lies and to explain why each point is a lie."

First, Sison said, the Arroyo administration cannot generate six million jobs in six years as promised because "the reactionary government is bankrupt.

"The economy will continue to shift because there are no profitable goods that can be exported in big quantities to the global market. The budgetary and trade deficits will increase. The crushing burden of foreign debt and local public borrowing will become heavier. Loans will contribute to benefit the foreign monopoly firms and big comprador-[the controlling elite] and not the small and medium enterprises."

Education sector

Since the government is bankrupt, Sison said, the need of the education sector for more school buildings, classrooms and books will not be met. Also, the government gives priority to the military and police and "for graft-ridden projects and the acquisition of expensive cars and office equipment for the high bureaucrats."

In addition, Sison said the government would not be able to balance the budget. "The deficit will continue to grow because of the graft-ridden projects. But social services, especially education, health, water, electricity and so on, will continue to be starved of funds and resources."

Failure of promise

He predicted the failure of Ms Arroyo's promise to provide electricity and water to barangays nationwide. "The regime is lying. It is aborting its policy of privatizing the electricity and water supply and the reality of power and water monopolies contributing raising prices."

Also, Sison said, Metro Manila cannot be decongested because of the "inflationary spending for the construction of government buildings and upscale hotels/ casinos in other parts of the country."

The promised development of Clark and Subic, he continued, "is not for the benefit of the Filipino people but for the US and other multinational firms and for the parking of US military planes and ships."

Sison, founding chair of the Communist Party of the Philippines, added that attempting the electoral process would be one more avenue of corruption and would not necessarily prevent massive cheating. "The computers can be programmed to give dishonest results."

He claimed the Arroyo government intended to end the peace negotiations with the CPP-NPA-NDFP. "It has not undertaken any effective measure to counteract the terrorist listing of the CPP-NPA. It has not complied with its promise to release political prisoners and facilitate the delivery of indemnification to the victims of human rights violations under the Marcos regime."

Reconciliation

Finally, Sison said, President Arroyo wants to reconcile with the Marcoses, Estradas and Cojuangcos, "[b]ut not with the toiling masses and the middle social strata that are now subjected to the most intolerable forms of oppression and exploitation."

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NDF wants next talks in China

THE NATIONAL Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) is working on the possibility of holding the next round of peace talks with the government next month in Beijing, China, since it is closer to Manila than Oslo, Norway.

As it had done in the past, Oslo hosted the third round of peace talks on June 23-25.

"Beijing is closer to RP-The GRP [Government Republic of the Philippines] and [President] Macapagal-Arroyo can fly there if there is a major breakthrough in the talks. She can grace the negotiations," said Fidel Agcaoili, a member of the NDFP peace panel.

The NDFP, he said, had asked the Royal Norwegian Government to facilitate the holding of the talks in Beijing, indicating that the Philippine government panel had not posed any objection to this.

"It's not yet in the bag. This will depend on talks between the Norwegian and Chinese governments," said Agcaoili in a phone interview. The Filipino panels cannot directly ask Beijing to grant the proposal in view of certain protocols.

The NDFP and the government panels are set to resume talks in late August. On top of the agenda are socioeconomic reforms, including land reform, national industrialization and the national economy's patrimony.

In last month's talks, both parties agreed to grant immunity or safe passage to the six members of each panel "while acting as a joint secretariat" and to designate the Norwegian government as "minister of finish" for the joint monitoring committee, Agcaoili said.

The NDFP panel also proposed that the government "undertake measures to complement the impending review by the United States of the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army's inclusion in the list of foreign terrorist organizations.

"Such measures should underscore the mutual obligation of the parties to uphold the national sovereignty of the Filipino people, respect for the rights of participants in the peace negotiations to safety and humanitarian guarantees...," the NDFP said in its communiqué.

The government panel agreed to "consider adopting" the measures, it added.

Jose Ma. Sison, NDFP chief political consultant, voiced dismay over the failure of the government panel to issue a communiqué after the June 23-25 talks.

"It is disappointing that the Arroyo regime sent the GRP panel to Oslo only to confirm to the Filipino [that] Arroyo was interested in peace negotiations while waiting for the proclamation by Congress as the newly elected President on June 24," he said in a statement.

"The utterance of the third round of formal talks was disappointing because of the chicanery and bad faith of the US-Arroyo regime," he added.

The government panel had explained that it could not issue a communiqué because it was merely a "consultation."

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10 July	The Anti-Money Laundering Act (MCLE Presented)	Three (3) (8:30-12:30)
	a) ADR b) Environmental Law (MCLE Presented)	Two (2) (1:00-3:00) Three (3) (3:15-6:15)
17 July	Pre-Trial and Trial Skills	Four (4) (8:00-12:15)
	Update in Family Law	Three (3) (1:30-5:30)
24 July	ADR in the Workplace	Three (3) (8:30-12:30)
	a) International Law b) Update in Labor Law	Two (2) (1:00-3:00) Three (3) (3:15-6:15)
31 July	Civil, Criminal and Administrative Liabilities of Lawyers	Three (3) (8:30-12:30)
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Rich BIR lawyer ordered dismissed

By Armand N. Nocum

OMBUDSMAN Simeon Marcelo has ordered the dismissal of a Bureau of Internal Revenue lawyer who allegedly amassed P30,962,219.95 in ill-gotten wealth in 22 years of service at the agency.

Lawyer Ariel A. Bernardo, who joined the bureau in 1979 at 22 years of age, was found to have acquired "property and money which is manifestly out of proportion to his salary and his lawful income."

The P20.99-million in property and cash that Bernardo allegedly acquired from 1979 to 2001 was deemed too high for the salaries he earned during the period.

Bernardo's total earnings for the period amounted to P2,468,040, or 1/12th of his alleged ill-gotten wealth.

For failing the government's lifestyle check program, Bernardo will suffer the cancellation of his government eligibility, forfeiture of his retirement benefits and perpetual disqualification from government service.

The case against Bernardo, now classified as Attorney V, was filed by Elena A. Bautista of the Anti-Graft and Intelligence Bureau of the Office of the Ombudsman. The panel of investigators included Jennifer Sargon, Medrado Jimeno and Virginia Mendoza.

Investigators said that Bernardo tried to explain his alleged ill-gotten wealth by claiming that he received a donation of P6 million in 2001. However, he "failed to present any evidence to show who the donor is, and whether the proper taxes have been paid," the investigators said.

Accordingly, such increase in his net worth is deemed to have been unlawfully acquired," the Ombudsman said.

Graft investigators also found that upon entering the BIR as entitled public servants, Bernardo had already managed to acquire agricultural property in Bulacan worth P18,375, an amount deemed too high for his salary of P4,161 then.

Bernardo became a lawyer in 1982. In 1985, he bought a condominium unit in Manila for P70,000. But from 1985 to 1988, his combined salary was only P107,928.

From 1988 to 2001, Bernardo bought various residential lots worth P800,000, P3 million, P1.8 million, and P4.1 million.

The Ombudsman also found that Bernardo had made several trips abroad from 1995 to 1997 even as he "failed to present any evidence of his financial capacity to support those frequent travels."

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PCGG to probe Marcos money transfer to Aussie firm

By Dona Pazolbgan

THE PRESIDENTIAL Commission on Good Government said it would look into a news report that the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos poured millions of dollars of his alleged ill-gotten wealth into the company of a former Australian cabinet minister even before he declared martial law.

Australia's The Sun Herald said court documents in Switzerland, where the Marcoses kept secret bank accounts, showed that Marcos transferred funds to a company set up by Irwin Hayson.

"We will study the matter, and if there is strong evidence and overwhelming proof, then we will pursue it," said PCGG Chair Purisima Nieto.

The PCGG, which has gone after the Marcos ill-gotten wealth since 1986, has just recently recovered the $684 million secret Swiss deposits of Marcos and his widow, Imelda.

Nieto has earlier said that the PCGG has just discovered the "tip of the iceberg" of the ill-gotten Marcos ill-gotten wealth.

Hayson, now 87, was described in the news paper as a multi-millionaire with a mansion in an exclusive district in Sydney and several investment companies.

The Sun Herald said Hayson was then 21 years-old and five months pregnant when she set up the first of her investment firms, Australia Pty Ltd. on Dec. 16, 1970.

The report said Australia received millions of dollars from the Asia Foundation, one of the dummy foundations that held secret Marcos Swiss accounts.

Asia was reportedly set up on June 23, 1971. The Sun Herald said Swiss court documents showed that Marcos on Sept. 12, 1972, made Hayson's Australia the sole and only beneficiary of Asia.

Hayson has a daughter named Amalia Josefa, whom the paper described as a vivacious young woman leading a flamboyant life. The Sun Herald noted that Josefa is the name of Marcos' late mother.

The Australian newspaper also noted that Marcos transferred funds to Hayson's firm just a month after he broke off with Hollywood actress and his alleged mistress, Irene Bruns.

The paper also quoted Swiss court papers as saying that Marcos siphoned $23 million from Japan's war reparations into Clarita, another one of the foundations that held his secret Swiss accounts.

Marcos, according to the news report, later used Clarita as transfer funds to Hayson's companies.

MILF wants Malaysia to stay on as peace broker

THE MORO Islamic Liberation Front prefers that the Malaysian government stay on as the broker for peace with the government despite grandstandings over the slow pace of the negotiations.

Opposition Sen. Aquilino Pimentel suggested that the government should stop relying solely on Malaysia, which has facilitated previous rounds of talks, and change its tack in negotiating with the secessionist rebels.

Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, stated that a host of agreements have been forged between the MILF and government panels since the Malaysian government started facilitating the talks.

He cited for instance the Tripoli agreement on peace, forged in June 2001, and subsequent pacts on the implementation of the agreement's security and economic aspects in August 2001 and May 2003.

"Why put the blame on Malaysia? It's very unfair," Kabalu said in a phone interview when asked about Pimentel's suggestion. "Ever let have any alternative? It doesn't sound good for him to criticize, but can't offer any alternative."

Besides, it was President Macapagal-Arroyo who asked the Malaysian government to act as a mediator in the negotiations. The MILF later affirmed the government's choice, according to Kabalu.

Hence, any step decision to drop Malaysia from the talks should be made by both parties, he added, saying "They will remain as facilitator unless there's a bilateral decision [to drop it from the talks]."

Talks are expected to resume in Kuala Lumpur next month.

Kabalu charged that the exploratory talks have not progressed since February this year because of the government's failure to comply with its commitments in previous rounds.

The commitments include the dropping of criminal charges against MILF leaders over the bombings in Davao in 2003, and complete military pullout from MILF complex in Maguindanao, the rebel group's former stronghold, he said.

"It's the government which is not complying with its commitments," Kabalu said.

NEW AIR FORCE CHIEF

Maj. Gen. Jose Reyes receives the saber of command of the Philippine Air Force from Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita during Wednesday's turnover at the Villamor Air Base during the 57th anniversary of the command. Reyes was appointed new commanding general of the air force to replace Maj. Gen. Avelino Torres, PAF officer in charge, who took over the top position when PAF chief Lt. Gen. Hector Santillan retired on May 14.

Bishop apologizes, but . . .

By Blanche S. Rivera

PEÑALO, for apologized.

But not to the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. or to First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo or to the Pagcor women employees he ordered to as "pasaway" (obstinate officers).

Pangasinan Archbishop Oscar Cruz yesterday gave his apologies to the people whose reputations and hard-earned money had been lost to the gambling agency.

"I understand that Pagcor would like me to apologize and clear it exactly what I am going to do. I'm going to make a public apology and the public apology is this," Cruz told reporters yesterday.

Cruz, who leads the Catholic Church's advocacy against gambling, was recently slapped with a libel case after he told the media that the Pagcor had used ill female employees as "pabili GROs" to entertain guests at the top-of-the-line Casino Filipino branch in Tarlac.

The Pagcor said that the women are actually counselor-welcoming officers (CWOs) and not GROs.

Cruz said that the women are actually counselor-welcoming officers (CWOs) and not GROs.

Immigration deputy probed for release of drug suspect

By Philip C. Tubeza

ACTING Justice Secretary Ma. Merceditas Gutierrez yesterday ordered Immigration Commissioner Alipio Fernandez to investigate reports that his deputy allegedly ordered the release of a Chinese national suspected of drug trafficking.

In a memo issued yesterday, Gutierrez told Fernandez to look into allegations that Bureau of Immigration (BI) Associate Commissioner Teodoro Ordoñez ordered the release of Li Yong Cheng.

She gave Fernandez 10 days to finish the investigation.

BI intelligence division chief Noted 1 Banda and his agents Anand Mucunjee, Medel Ignito, and Adrian Manapsalan earlier accused Ordoñez of ordering Li's release although the Chinese national was suspected of being a drug trafficker.

The three immigration agents arrested Li on June 26 in his electrical shop on 9 Dorotan St. in Caloocan City based on a Philippine National Police report which said that the shop was being used as a depot for illegal drug activities.

However, Ordoñez later denied that there was anything illegal about Li's release and even incited the tables on his accusers.

In a press statement issued on Wednesday, Ordoñez said he ordered Li's release because the intelligence agents' operation on June 26 was "highly suspicious and irregular."

He said Li's arrest was illegal since it was based on a memorandum order and not on a mission order from Fernandez. Fernandez added that threats and his spouse did not constitute as duly pre-operation report that Li was in possession of trafficked.

But the three agents stood by their allegations and said they were saddened since Immigration even berated them in front of Li before the Chinese was released.

Unesco cites Mirant for mangrove rehab

THE UNITED Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) has cited Mirant Philippines for its environmental advocacy, hailed by its massive mangrove rehabilitation program in Quezon province.

"We commend Mirant for being environment-friendly and environment-conscious," said Leonardo Carnacho, representative of Unesco-Philippines, pointing out that the company has been doing its share in saving the environment.

Carnacho, a scientific environmentalist, is conducting a nationwide environmental audit of the Philippines on behalf of Unesco, collecting and processing data from all of the country's 79 provinces so far.

"Mirant is one of the outstanding farmers of our environment itself," she said. Mirant is the country's largest independent power producer.

Among the activities in line with the audit being conducted in cooperation with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) was a visit to Mirant's power generating facility in Naglihan, Quezon as well as its massive mangrove rehabilitation project that spans Bayabas and neighboring Padre Burgos.

"We had the occasion to fly over Naglihan and we were delighted to see its Carbon Sink, a concentration of mangroves and forest trees," says Carnacho.

A total of 150 hectares of both upland and mangrove forests are being rehabilitated by Mirant in partnership with the DENR under its Carbon Sink project, which also aims to provide additional livelihood to locals and promote eco-tourism in the area.

Both of Mirant's top generating facilities in Pagbilao, Quezon and Sual, Pangasinan are ISO 14001 certified, a tribute to their world-class environmental management systems, Mirant said in a statement. Its generating facility in Subic, Cebu, also recently received an ISO 14001 certification.

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Friday, July 9, 2004
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1st Reading: Hos 14:2-10
Gospel: Mt 10:16-23

SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

The WORLD

Edited by Lawrence B. Ibarra

FROM IRAQ TO AMERICA

US moved uranium without UN approval

UNITED NATIONS—US nuclear authorities and UN nuclear officials appeared to disagree on whether Washington had the authority to move uranium and highly radioactive material that could be used in so-called "dirty bombs" from Iraq to the United States.

The nearly 2 tons of low-enriched uranium and approximately 1,000 highly radioactive items transferred from Iraq last month had been placed under seal by the International Atomic Energy Agency at the sprawling Tuwaitha nuclear complex, 19 km south of Baghdad, UN officials said Wednesday.

"The American authorities just informed us of their intention to remove the material, but they never sought authorization from us," said Gustavo Zlauvinen, head of the IAEA's New York office.

Under UN resolutions adopted after the 1991 Gulf War, the IAEA was authorized to oversee the destruction of Iraq's nuclear programs and monitor its activities to ensure that the program was not revived.

But Paul Longsworth, deputy administrator for defense nuclear nonproliferation in the US National Nuclear Security Administration, said Wednesday night the United States didn't need IAEA approval for the transfer.

"We believe we have the legal authority to do it," he said. "We are in custody of the material now, and we have the permission of the Iraqi government to take this out of the country."

US Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham disclosed the secret airlift from Iraq on Tuesday as "a major achievement" in an attempt to "keep potentially dangerous nuclear material out of the hands of terrorists."

The airlift ended on June 23, five days before the United States transferred sovereignty to Iraq's new interim government.

IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei said in a letter to the Security Council circulated Wednesday that Washington informed the agency on June 19, 2003, that "due to security concerns" it intended to transfer some nuclear material stored at Tuwaitha to the United States.

At the time, the agency took note of the US intention to remove the nuclear material "from agency verification... and only expressed a view on the agency's verification requirements," he said.

According to the letter, the United States informed the IAEA on June 30 that approximately 1.8 tons of uranium, enriched to a level of 2.6 percent, another 1 kg of low-enriched uranium, and approximately 1,000 highly radioactive sources had been transferred on June 23. AP

Missing Marine in Lebanon, US says, citing 'credible info'

TRIPOLI—The US Embassy on Thursday said it has "credible information" that missing US Marine Cpl. Wassef Ali Hassoun in Iraq is safe in his native Lebanon.

But Elizabeth Wharton, public affairs officer at the US Embassy in Beirut, said it could not confirm the information that it had received about the fate of 20-year-old Hassoun, who went missing in Iraq more than four weeks ago.

"We have credible information that he is in country and safe, but we're not been able to confirm it and we're working on confirmation of that," Wharton said.

An Iraqi militant group said Monday it was holding the Lebanese-born Muslim in a safe place but hadn't killed him after he had promised not to return to the US military. Qatar's al-Jazeera satellite television broadcast the statement from the "Islamic Response Movement," which claimed responsibility June 27 for Hassoun's kidnapping.

US military officials have said Hassoun disappeared June 20 from Iraq on "unauthorized leave," but changed his status to "captured" after he turned up on television blindfolded with a turban hanging over his head.

On Saturday, a statement appeared on a website known for extremist Muslim comment said the Marine had been beheaded. A day later, another Web statement declared the Marine had not been killed.

Despite media reports that Hassoun has been staying at the American embassy since returning to Lebanon, Wharton said: "We have no confirmation of his location whatsoever... We do not have any confirmation at this point of his location or whether he is in fact in Lebanon."

Sami Hassoun, Hassoun's elder brother, said at the family home in the port city of Tripoli Thursday that he had no new information to give to the media.

There were no overt signs of joy or preparations to welcome the Marine at the family estate, an apartment on the second floor of a six-story building in the low-income Abu Samra district of Lebanon's second largest city.

On Tuesday, Sami Hassoun said that someone visited the family in northern Lebanon and told them his brother was free and well. A Lebanese government official on Wednesday said the kidnappers released Hassoun after he pledged he would not return to the US military.

Both Sami Hassoun and the government official have said the Marine's whereabouts were unknown.

For Hassoun to make his way to Lebanon, about 800 km away, he would have to travel by land through Syria, which borders Iraq's western Anbar province, where Hassoun's unit, the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, is based. Hassoun worked as a translator. AP

American forces stretched thin, says general

WASHINGTON—US forces have been severely strained by military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, troop strengths official said before a congressional committee Wednesday.

Gen. Richard Cody told a hearing of the House armed services committee that recent troop deployments have taken a toll on US readiness to deploy elsewhere, and ease to reduce troops currently deployed taking part in US-led military efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"We are stretched thin with our active and reserve component forces right now," Cody said lawmakers as the looming 10-US troop reduction.

"We just did the largest move of the Army since World War II. You can't move 0.5 division and 240,000 soldiers without stressing the force," he said adding the military officials "are concerned about it."

The Pentagon is attempting to meet swelling demands for troops in Iraq and elsewhere by reforming the Army's divisions into more numerous, more independent and rapidly deployable combat brigade teams.

Military officials also have temporarily increased the size of the army by 30,000, during the transition, a move Cody said was indispensable for waging the war on global terrorism.

"This is a different war. That's why it's so important that everyone understands, and that's why we asked for the 30,000, so we could build up," he said.

"We needed to have that impact of the 30,000 early so that we could get the right... balance across our force while we're building the new transformed Army and still sustaining the global war on terrorism," the four-star general said.

Lt.-Gen. Norton Schwartz, director of operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, testified that it will likely be years before the 33,000 strong Iraqi Army currently being trained by US forces will be ready to take up the slack. AFP

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India also builds fence in Kashmir

ON 'IL LINE OF CONTROL, Kashmir... "The army captain whose government is building the controversial barrier says that, when completed, it will protect his people from attacks by Islamic terrorists.

Once the high-tech fence is finished, militants will no longer be able to infiltrate this side of the disputed but treaty and kill his soldiers and civilians, he says.

On the other side of the barrier, anguished Muslim villagers protest that it is taking their land and cutting them off from their homelands.

The day before the world's most volatile or Israel's separation barrier in the West Bank, the arguments, as regularly rehearsed, certainly sound familiar.

But this fence, running for almost 1,000 km, is in the disputed territory of Kashmir. And the two sides at loggerheads are India and Pakistan, not Israel and the Palestinians.

"Once infiltration stops, we will be able to finish off militancy in Kashmir in no time," Indian Army Capt. Sachin, who uses only his last name, said at Sonapindi, a post 3,500 meters high in the Himalayas overlooking Pakistani Kashmir.

The fence – which bristles in mesh-designed ground sensors that signal movements – includes two rows of barbed wire that are partly electrified. And landmines line the ground to maim anyone who makes it across.

India began trying to erect a fence on the rugged Himalayan terrain after a mid-may with Pakistan backed Islamic militants in 1999, but work ground to a halt due to firing from the other side.

And it appeared the fence would remain unbuilt in the region where tens of thousands have died since 1989. However, in November, the two sides agreed on Kashmir border countries – ending nearly daily shelling between the two countries – since when India has hastened to finish the fence.

Pakistan continues to formally protest the fence building, saying it violates 1949 and 1972 agreements between the nuclear powers which have fought two wars over Kashmir, but has toned down its rhetoric and done nothing to stop the construction.

Referring to the Line of Control, or LoC, between the two, disputed parts of Kashmir, Pakistani foreign ministry spokesperson Masood Khan said: "This fence is not affecting the status of the LoC, the LoC remains there. But there is no justification for building or considering a fence that is creating so much misunderstanding between the two countries."

He denied that the lack of concerted action by Pakistan to stop the fence being built was tacit approval for its construction.

"Pakistan has not given any approval – tacit or explicit – to the Indian government for continuing with... the fence."

But the issue had to be seen in a wider context, he said, Rather than take little to the world court, as the Palestinians have with Israel, Pakistan is seeking dialogue. AFP

PALESTINIANS children play next to a section of the separation barrier built by Israel in the West Bank town of Abu Dis on July 7. AFP

Extremist Jews may be plotting Sharon slay

JERUSALEM—Extremist Jews opposed to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan to withdraw from Gaza may be planning to assassinate him, prompting heightened security around the controversial premier, officials said on Wednesday.

Outbursts by frustrated rightists online and an atmosphere of extremism fanned by bits of "theologian-ease" from Gaza settlers [illegible] resulted concern about an attempt to kill Sharon, the newspaper Haaretz and other unnamed territory.

Internal Security Service Minister Tzahi Hanegbi said the main threat would be posed by an assassin who might target Sharon just as ultra-nationalist Jew Yigal Amir shot dead Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995.

Sharon has gone from being the darling of the pro-settler, right-wing camp to its adversary since announcing early this year plans to remove all 21 Jewish settlements in Gaza and four of 120 in the West Bank by the end of 2005.

Since then the Sharon has security overdrive, which is assigned to protect Sharon, has tightened security around him. Reuters

Eradication of bird flu seen unlikely

HAIN—Chinese researchers warn on Thursday that there are only slender chances of stamping out the bird flu virus, which spurred a health scare across Southeast Asia last year and raised fears of a killer pandemic.

In a study of the genetic sequence of the so-called H5N1 virus that pioneer the disease, they say the agent is firmly established in duck and chicken flocks in China and other countries, and will only be rooted out by a dedicated, long-term campaign.

"H5N1 virus is now endemic in poultry in Asia and has gained an extraordinary ecological niche from which to present a long-term pandemic threat to humans," the scientists warn.

At the moment, the virus can be transmitted from birds to humans, sometimes with fatal consequences, but not from humans to humans.

But the propensity of birds kept to humans, and also to pigs, which can harbor both avian and human viruses and act as a vessel to exchange them, poses a special threat, the experts say.

It could create a virus that would be both lethal and transmissible among humans.

They warn against complacency, saying that the risk of contagion can only be reduced and delayed—but not eliminated—by personal measures to cull and contain, and by the fortuitous end of the flu season.

The flu season in Southeast Asia runs from October to March, when cooler temperatures help the virus to survive and spread.

"Governments in the region face an endemic and recurrent problem that presents a serious threat to human health," the study warns soberly.

"These developments pose a threat to public and veterinary health in the region and, potentially the world, and suggest that long-term control measures are required." AFP

Sudan pressed to alleviate Darfur crisis

LONDON— Sudan came under mounting international pressure Wednesday to take steps to ease the humanitarian crisis in its western Darfur region as Britain and France called on Khartoum to take action to disarm an militias and rein in pro-government militias or face possible sanctions.

German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer also announced he would travel to Sudan in the coming weeks, saying it was "of the greatest importance" that the government in Khartoum disarm the militias as it promised to do after a recent visit by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan.

Chad, which has taken in more than 100,000 refugees, called on rebels to take part in talks planned for later this month.

An estimated 10,000 people have died in the region, a million have been driven from their homes in other parts of Sudan and 120,000 have sought refuge in neighboring Chad, it said, with janjaweed militias attacking villages, killing, raping and looting.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair warned that Britain could back sanctions against Sudan if much needed foreign aid fails to reach victims of the conflict.

Speaking in Parliament, Blair said he reviewed the crisis Tuesday with Annan, and that "there is food there now" ready to be distributed to those who need it.

But, he added, the Sudanese authorities had to do their part as well—"and if they do not cooperate, we will have to consider what further measures are still take."

Annan told African leaders Sunday that as "your greatest humanitarian crisis rapidly could unfold in Darfur unless concrete action is taken to stop the janjaweed massacring villagers and razing their homes. AFP

China overturns Viagra patent

SHANGHAI—China on Thursday defended its decision to overturn Pfizer's patent for Viagra in a ruling seen as a setback to protection of intellectual property rights in the country.

The US makers of the top selling erectile dysfunction drug were in breach of China's intellectual property rights (IPR) law when they failed to sufficiently explain "technological" uses of Viagra's key ingredient, an official with the State Intellectual Property Office (Sipo) said.

"If you widen the description of the (ingredient's) technological uses, you could likely be violating the patent rights of others," the Sipo official said on condition of anonymity.

Although the same office granted Pfizer in 2001 a patent for sildenafil citrate, Viagra's key active ingredient, the official explained Sipo had the right to revoke the patent.

The official said after approval of sildenafil citrate, more than 10 Chinese companies filed official complaints, forcing the Sipo to review its decision.

"When there are requests to invalidate the patent, our review committee should go back to look to it," the said. AFP

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OPINION

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Spoils of corruption

EDITORIAL

How bad is corruption? A World Bank report cites a study by Procurement Watch Inc. that the Philippines lost P65 billion to 2001 to corruption, an amount that could have built more than half a million houses for the poor. A Social Weather Stations survey of 780 managers across the country shows most companies set aside 22 percent of the cost of a government contract for paying bribes. Only 21 percent of the companies surveyed keep one out of corruption.

Small wonder that the problem preoccupied the annual Bishops-Businessmen's Conference. And taking its cue from the businessmen and the Catholic hierarchy, early in her new term, President Macapagal-Arroyo has vowed to wage a campaign against corruption. She has directed Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo and Chief of Staff Rigoberto Tiglao "to counterattack" the administration's collaboration with the IMF on stamping out corruption. But she asked for patience since corruption, she said, could not be eliminated "in a single stroke, as a dragon could be killed with a single swing of St. Michael's sword."

There are two things to be said about her initiative. First, it appears to pinpoint low administration necessity on the wrong side of history. Previous presidents had made loud pronouncements of licking corruption at the start of their offices only to be locked and overwhelmed by the menace in the end. Several, the Presidency may not be the exception to the historical trend because she has political debts to pay. And IOUs are often instruments to corruption.

Her first Cabinet appointment—Angelo Reyes to the Department of Interior and Local Government—shows early on how the payment of political debts betrays the rhetorical flourish at fighting corruption and instilling good governance. As defense secretary, Reyes failed to stop the coup attempt last year by officers who complained that the military brass was not doing anything about corruption that had seen the accumulation and weaponry of the Armed Forces going to the hands of rebels by shady transactions.

Reyes replaces Jose D. Lina who has a cleaner and more visionary record as a public official. Lina's most shining moment may be his infallible act of support as governor of Laguna from the Estrada administration when Joseph Estrada was exposed as having pocketed protection money nationwide from the illegal numbers game of jueteng. Paradoxically, Reyes' first public pronouncement as DILG head was to urge the legalization of jueteng, an unnerving admission of helplessness in stopping it.

Granted that Reyes is not corrupt, it is befuddled to expect reticence from someone who failed to address complaints of corruption in the military and triggered a coup in the process. Without the credibility and the credentials, he may unwittingly abet corruption in the police and the local governments. Lack of official competence and credibility is a strong factor in the resilience of corruption.

Thus, politics gets in the way of establishing and consolidating a good and competent government; it abets corruption. Already, a number of politicians who supported the President are bragging that they would join her Cabinet. Former Iloilo Rep. Raul Gonzalez said he had been promised the justice portfolio. Former Sen. Ramon Revilla said he would like to be appointed in public works secretary adding that he expected his son, Sen. Bong Revilla, to be appointed chair of the Senate committee on public works.

The gall of these people to campaign openly for importance—and lucrative—posts. They are demonstrating an utter lack of grace and modesty. They clearly believe that the Cabinet and other high offices are prizes, not opportunities for public service.

We are not saying that Gonzalez, Revilla and others lobbying for positions are corrupt. But it is necessary to instill the values and methods of professional and competent management of government in order to check corruption. It is curious that while politicians are openly lobbying for high posts, the President is not talking about any talent search and screening that characterized her first appointments during her first term.

Putting people who do not have the credibility and credentials in positions of authority will fly in the face of the corruption campaign. Electoral victory could have spelled the prospects for a firmer campaign against corruption. The victors may divide among themselves not only the spoils of war, but also the spoils of corruption.

Why GMA wants Charter change

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

AFTER PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo was proclaimed and inaugurated as the new President, I hoped that she would change and would fulfill her promises of reforms and changes in the government. I thought that because this is her last term (she cannot run for reelection) she will have no pressure from politicians and businessmen because she wouldn't need their support and donations for another political campaign. I thought she would do only the right things as a legacy for the powerful reforms who had always exerted influence on previous presidents seeking reelection. I thought that this time she would want to be remembered well by the people and not as an exalted plaster in history.

I was wrong.

She has frankly started her new term and she has already submitted several bad bets. In fact, she started on the wrong foot.

No sooner was she "sworn in" to secure office as acting chief executive, "the politics of patronage and accommodation for cooperation is starting to ripe [sic]. Not true news of the reappointment of Interior Secretary Joey Lina, which was assured by indications that it was due to President Arroyo's failure to win in Laguna (Lina's home province). Next was the lifting announcement that the Presidency had reappointed Virgilio Garcillano and Commissioner Mehol Sadain to the Commission. Now comes the appointment of Vice President Noli de Castro as social welfare secretary over the protests of the incumbent Dinky Soliman."

Ms Arroyo's judgment in making appointments is at best spotty and here are two more proofs: 1. Social Welfare Secretary Soliman is by best Cabinet member and one of the few bright spots in her unpopular administration. Until the public opinion against her vice presidency, she had the highest approval rating of the members of the incumbent Senior Cabinet."

Soliman has been very successful in the Department of Social Welfare and Development whereas Dr. Cantos is a question mark. But she have demanded the position (and she does really promised it to exchange the him agreeing to be her running mate) and so she readily dropped her head off, as any who had been not only outspoken but very loyal to her, to secure reconsideration for Vice President. She has shown again that between merit and politics, she has set wise hands down in her government.

In short, we are still witnessing the same style of governance that bedeviled her first term and made her so unpopular that she could have lost the election had her lies not, so many people suspected, performed magic on the overdosers of caravan. it is still dirty politics, patronage, accommodation and the spoils system that characterize her new term, not the merit system—base she promised. not the reforms that the people expected.

As for the Vice President, I do not understand why he lists for the DPWH when he can have any other and more prestigious Cabinet position. Unless of course this is his first step to the presidency in 2010. Continuing total support to the post is a surefire way of winning votes. Sinc, the job is easy, you just distribute goods: it is an, normally, you don't have to think. And you need no brain power when there are calamities.

And would it not the step to the presidency taken by Chiti herself? Where she was vice president, she also held the DSWD.

But I would like to give an unsolicited advice to Vice President de Castro: Resign from the time bank the DPWD to Soliman. She has tried to put on a brave face but she is really hurt and disappointed. She felt "a sense of betrayal," she told the President.

The spinning of campaign to the "betrayed" officials shows who is the hero and who are the villains in the eyes of the public. Dr Cantos has dropped a notch in their esteem. They already have an epithet for him. "Mine-maybe," which is the same epithet hurled at anybody who mouths the opinion of another.

The way you have taken, Noli, grabbing the DPWD, is the wrong part to misbehaving. Use it back and you will regain the control path. Tell the President that after realizing how well Soliman is doing in the DSWD and how well she is loved by the people, you have changed your mind. People will say, "What a gentleman the Vice President is" and your popularity will soar. Be hellbreaked and courteous on this cell ish path, just as when you're the boss, and merit your reputation for integrity.

I tell you, being a gentleman is a good positive reinforcement. Even you should know that.

* * *

The Supreme reversal also dwelt on the "hasty and ill-advised" reappointment of Garcillano and Barcelona to the Comelec, who are "clearly clothed by the public." But I don't want to spoil your breakfast. His compatriots can really make you want to puke! So I will skip that and go to another bad judgment of the President that again shows her head a still full of politics and patronage.

This is her decision to push for the elections, next year, of delegates to a constitutional convention when it is very clear that the public does not want to amend the Charter at this time. It is only the congressmen and their leader and lackeys who are pushing it.

The decision shows that Gloria is still partying politics. Apparently she has promised that she would not be beholden to politicians. But then, breaking promises is not new to her.

Besides, her ambition is again tearing her ugly head. She wants to run again when her term expires in 2010. The present Constitution prohibits reelection. But what if that prohibition will be removed by the Congress? And if we shift to a parliamentary system, she can run for prime minister.

Illiberal democracy

PASSION FOR REASON

Raul C. Pangalangan

AT A GET-together during the martial law years, I often found myself on the wrong end of political arguments and many emotions, meditation in my breast that I was shaking my safety and my future for a worthy cause: the restoration of democracy in our country and, as things were in the bitterest of that time, the building of a bright common future for our people.

So struggled until a friend of mine, I would disobeying her, invite Salonga's brother, retired, 'S Message of hope is Filipino Who Can." I firmly Voice then calling upon young people to unite. We kept our subplots of his brother's movement secret—unless someone found out, by asking in Mayon's Hall, and would struggle our egos to distribute, and I would people who, upon reading the cover of the booklet I had left behind of them, would instantly throw it back to me, as if to say, "I don't want this literally as indeed it was politically.

Toward the 1980s, the democracy struggle was "mainstreamed," and the agenda soon became the restoration of the pre-Marcos consensual order—the very same order that easily caved in under martial law because it had lost meaning in the hearts of many, and as nothing but a democratic veneer for oligarchic power, "where the rich as well as the poor had the same right to sleep under the bridges." After all, it was the pre-Marcos Congress that produced the infamous line "What are we in power for?"—originally uttered in the Spanish of old country mind you, if you check the transcripts.

The irony is that the subsequent democracy movement of the 1980s rediscovered those flawed, diminished institutions, and instead about his vice "restoration of democracy." Today as we talk of Charter change all over again, we must remember that it is largely the pre-Marcos democracy that we restored in our 1987 Constitution, and that once again we seek to change.

But there is a unique twist to our session. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo was instrumental in that change.

Then in the power of the political people, Philippines can schedule among themselves, but this democracy have to vote elections and must look good to the voter. If political power flows from the opinion of the public, then true power rests in the hands of those who mediate public opinion, located in the pattern of civil society. Without power organized through vote groups can meet and the noise and remember the politicians hear.

Together, however, they have shown us the dark side of democracy. Energized by new technologies of e-mail and texting, the gentry can mobilize crowds (read: mob) and, more and worse as they every fit and neigh. Academics call this "participation democracy," as if every government decision is subject to an instant popularity survey, as if every decision is made by counting votes, rather than by thinking and by weighing policy options.

The author Fareed Zakaria, in "The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy in Home and Abroad," argues that democratic majorities have been the most insecure, and that the persons are also for liberty have been made by leaders who defied popular prejudices. Our mission, therefore, rather than making the world safe for democracy, is to make democracy safe for the world.

The advocates of Charter change aim to do this by those circulating Philippine democracy and taking the power to decide the chief executive away from the people and vesting it in the politicians.

But, as Zakaria notes, there are other ways to make democracy work. We must have the political branches to work as they were meant, that is, to check and restrain each other, the people were, but involve the non-political branches of government from politics, and allow the Supreme Court, the constitutional commissions, and the administrative agencies to decide according to their expertise, completely insulated from the mischief of trading brigades and popularity surveys.

* * *

What can you say of GMA's reappointment of Comelec Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano who only before appointee Mehol Sadain as official only gave the Supreme Court a piece of his mind on the EV citizenship case, when what the Court wanted was the commission's, not his individual, views? Critics view this as his "reward" for when Sen. Nene Pimentel had called on "undemocratic abuse of partisanship and servility to the person who appointed [him]." Indeed, his reappointment was one of the first acts of GMA on the very day of her inauguration on June 30, and indeed, though his term had ended on June 30, he did not cease out of his office for the next 20 days, apparently as instructed GMA would bless him down.

When I various understand is why Garcillano, defending himself, said, "In my regular status, I am not afraid of anybody. Especially when I was embarrassed, defending my [Regime 4] divorce decree issue." The report continues, "Garcillano added he even told some that he was not doing his job but if that is the task of the appointee, he is willing to resign."

Why would Garcillano be "embarrassed" that GMA lost in his report? Did he consider it his duty to make her win? Why should he be embarrassed that she lost? Wasn't he supposed to be neutral? Likewise, why would he tell the local Comelec director that "he was not doing his job" since GMA lost in his district? Who it for job-to make GMA win?

I can give Garcillano the benefit of the doubt, that he was not doing anything I do not know him at all, and if I met him in the street, I wouldn't be able to tell if it was him or Isidro Lit. But the nine-day words some insights from the latter's records. It recognizes Garcillano's clear sense of his role as Comelec commissioner as a key part of the Commission's lofty guarantee of "free, orderly, honest, peaceful and credible elections," and it isn't hiring to assess.

Timid approach to governance

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

OSMEÑA has directed ministries, President Macapagal-Arroyo has begun to confront—if cautiously but unleashed powers to launch bold initiatives and revamp her Cabinet. Her first policy statements...*doc*

Despite pro-poor agenda enunciated in her inaugural speech—based not on beliefs of solidarity, but was a more practical reminder of the program embodied in the election campaign platform.

Neither did it set up clear-cut battle and challenge the public's imagination. With a new administration, the public expected to be assured with new initiatives, throwing aside upon the incoming regime the baggage of the past and the unexpressed emotional renewal. The agenda did not even offer an innovative approach to attack the most critical economic concern of the nation: the ballooning fiscal deficits and huge public debt.

Instead, the agenda was a list of the usual set of urgency and fiscal rules. Through it, the new administration, although now headed by a relatively young and energetic president, appeared relaxed, out-of-touch with the times to be sure of its term.

During its first week, the administration started out on the wrong foot in its relations with the opposition agenda—by another agenda: the move to amend the Constitution. It isn't clear whether the President wants a constitutional shift during her term, which would have the effect of shortening the term of the next President in her constituency. The signals became even more confusing when the President has control of the state, with other people in the administration and in her political coalition driving the Charter change issue in the context of public debate. For example, we are puzzled by Senate President Franklin Drilon's statement that the public the President's position on the issue of the shift to the parliamentary-federal system, which is being pushed by Speaker Jose de Venecia and her own political allies in Congress. We would like to know what the President's "leaning" on the Presidency-related. What is ignacio Bunye, the President's spokesperson, doing? The statement of

...doc

Beholding 'Imelda'

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

IMELDA Bist...Glimmer of the controversial documentary "Imelda," on the former First Lady and widow of the dictator Ferdinand Marcos, admits to having only one dominant memento of life in the Philippines under martial law. One of dozens of diamond-and-ruby-studded pieces of jewelry that she collected from all over the world—her grandchildren used to play with them, when being in the air of Imelda Marcos and she utilized to wear while she got in and she can left the grounds. Only then would all the other can be "put away."

Throughout parents and older relatives (an uncle, Simeon Ilisi, would later serve as head of the Presidential Commission on Good Government, tasked with tracking down the Marcoses' hidden wealth) dismissed time as the only assumption compass on the rise, when "the grandchildren close the gates after leaving

It can't be business as usual

EDSA' class Presidents Macapagal-Arroyo has secured a fresh mandate to continue the good fight against illegal drugs and criminality. The substantial number of votes that swung to Fernando Poe Jr. reflects not only his popularity but also the so-called "protest vote" of a large segment of our electorate against the establishment.

Mr. Arroyo, therefore, should make appointments to the Cabinet, the Supreme Court, the Comelec and other constitutional bodies and even controversial power-users in agencies, such as Napocor, Bureau of Customs, Bureau of Internal Revenue, Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, based on integrity, competence and credentials. It can't be business as usual.

She must be encouraged to continue on making difficult, even unpopular, decisions to reform the entire government and transform it into a more responsive and efficient bureaucracy. It can't be business as usual.

She must be as astute at taking bold and dramatic measures to drastically shorten the cutters of corruption that has engulfed the country. It can't be business as usual.

She must be a reformist, taking the lead in finally effecting wide-ranging electoral and constitutional reforms to strengthen our political and democratic institutions. It can't be business as usual.

She will need to be an administrator, taking true ibusiness approach to the public good, instead of the usual pork-barrel infrastructure, including the mass revolving public soldiers and energy taxation and fiscal deficit, foreign debt and loan-swings, bureaucracy and power rates, population and poverty. It can't be business as usual.

She must be a leader, wielding the whip and using her mental acumbatacy and presidential clout to persuade the majority coalition to both Houses of Congress to facilitate the early passage of all vital legislation with wide ranging impact on our economy, educational system, justice system, customs and national security. It can't be business as usual.

There are difficult and risky times for our country. It is awfully important that she succeeds.

—FIDEL U. VIRAL
130 Lotus Avenue Se.
Capitol Knoll Village,
Tandang Sora, Quezon City

Not the entertainers' but the oligarchy's fault

RUBY cousin "Stanzia for hope" (INQ, 6/28/04), Inquirer A. Chiu needs a dig in movie actors, sportsmen and media men. Dumping these members of entertainers' participating in electoral politics. These entertainers, according to Chiu, are an aberration to the job. To me/Mare, it was the economy.

Sir Chiu failed to mention, or simply ignored, politicians with supposedly impeccable academic credentials, like lawyers, who have run into "entangled" country. Even I was ill like both cases—multinational, like a cyber-chairman, where politicians are politicos and public services for private gain—for themselves and their associates, the economic elite.

Just take a look at the country's structure: the few who are rich get richer via the top, while it costs more to log behind in many neighborhoods and the Filipino masses continue wallowing in the mire of poverty. All that, courtesy of the so-called well-schooled politicians and businessmen.

In the United States, Ronald Reagan, a non-scholar, a non-intellectual, was a spectacularist, their Hollywood B-movie actor, who became California governor for two consecutive terms (night court). After which he was elevated to the most powerful position in the world, the US presidency. Reagan was proclaimed the two consecutive terms (night court). After which he was elevated to the most powerful position in the world, the US presidency. Reagan was proclaimed for

Loose guns rise to half-million

From page A1

cop money-making unit, collected some P600 million in 2002 from firearms licensing alone. It issues more than 1,000 licenses daily.

The number of loose firearms reached a lofty figure because it included the 189,796 gun owners who refused to again register in compliance with then President Gloria Arroyo's memorandum in 1998, Carnigal said.

Some previous PNP officials failed to maximize the value of the guns, there was practically no way to check if these had already been "re-registered" or have remained loose, Cuadra explained.

Amnesty program

On Tuesday, the government ended its amnesty program for unregistered firearms. As of last month, however, only 5,410 guns had been registered under the program.

"We're working to have the amnesty extended because it's really a good way to address this problem with loose firearms," Carnigal said. "We should remember that it's always better that we know how many guns (without bans) and which gun belongs to who."

In the case of guns with expired licenses, Carnigal admitted that it was the result of a "bureaucratic" problem in which the PNP failed to release the licenses on time.

"We're doing our best to correct this now," he said. "So far, we're meeting our targets because someone renewing his license can complete the procedure and get his new license in 30 minutes."

Director Avelino Razon, PNP director for operations, told gun industry leaders and members during their five-day firearms show yesterday that there appeared to be a problem with the computer system of the FEO.

By registering a gun under a second or different name, a person could get away with owning three or more guns, he explained.

Letters to owners

The PNP has also "gone out of its way," Carnigal said, in send letters to the gun owners whose licenses have expired. It would have cost the PNP a whopping P1 million. The CSG removed asked regional police offices to help distribute the letters.

Acknowledging the fact the some guns could fall into the wrong hands, Razon pointed out that the registration was the key to keeping the backup firearms those who decide guns, and those who love to own them.

"The last place where gun owners use their guns is now four and twice in the community, in the case of unlicensed owners, and three times by police enforcers of the law have the duty to implement rules and regulations on firearms use and ownership," he said.

But Razon also have the duty to inform the police and other security authorities of situations involving the illegal handling of firearms, he said.

Firearms show

Even as police authorities are being asked to assume for their seeming inability to regulate gun ownership and crack down on unlawful gun owners, top PNP officials showed up yesterday at the five-day show of the gun industry at SM Megamall.

"The PNP looks forward to the next few days with great interest, and we hope to be able to develop a stronger relationship with Allied (Association of Firearms and Ammunition Dealers) and other gun associations in the years to come," Razon said.

He said he the police fully supported the campaign for "responsible gun ownership" and stressed that ARMAS (Act 8 was "in good hands with the PNP."

Jaworski Yap shootout

Police authorities are still vainly trying to find two members of influential families who figured in a shootout in San Clemente, Mandaluyong City on June 21.

ACTION star Lito Lapid looks like a senator and more of his screen persona when he showed up at the 5-day Sporting Arms Show at the SM Megamalls that is SM Megamalls Thursday. Top-ranking police officials also attended to greet the top guns of the industry.

Firepower on exhibit

CORRIDOR on display now at the Trade Hall, located on the fifth floor of the SM Megamall, is one of the biggest gun dealers, ammunition and other weapons available in the country.

In the midst of the enormous concentration of firepower lies a bullet-proof vehicle. A detached door has been placed beside the car to highlight bullet marks on the side door. The window bore no holes, proof of its impermeability to armed attack.

At the far end of the hall, there is a practice shooting gallery. People could be seen lining up for a chance to try out first some of the country's newest rifles.

Also seen at the exhibit were Sen. Lito Lapid, Rep. Rene Velarde of the Bidoy party list group, and Mandaluyong Vice Mayor Jose Cruz.

Asked what his thoughts were on the gun ownership debate, Lapid said he was pro-gun. But he was keeping his mind open to other views, he said.

"We are looking at the safety of our law enforcers because they need it. But some who are given guns abuse them. We must study the issue," he said.

Lapid admitted that he was amazed at the number, shapes and sizes of guns on display yesterday. "This is the first time I've seen these kinds of guns. What I usually see are (guns) used by cowboys in the movies," he said.

The senator picked up a 9-mm Beretta and a .357 Magnum in the delight of press photographers and TV crew members.

Read gangs led by Rhett Joseph Jaworski, 28, a son of former Sen. Robert Jaworski Sr., and Hugo Elton Yap, 31, a son of businessman Tony Yap, turned Florida Street at the back of the Isaiah Restaurant into a virtual war zone, leaving behind 61 spent shells, 11 of them from an M-16 rifle.

After a week of intense pressure from the media, police have charged Rhett Jaworski, his brother Neil Michael, Elton Yap, his brother Mark, and several John Does with illegal discharge of firearms, malicious mischief and slight and assault.

Gun ownership is currently being held in hold, with anti-gun advocates citing cases where "responsible" gun owners shot, wounded and even killed innocent civilians.

Pro-gun advocates, on the other hand argue that defending one's life, family and property is a basic human right that a law enforcer such as Razon.

Abiel officers said they were selling about 50,000 more units.

Jaworski's 11 guns

Asked how the police could have allowed the young Jaworski to own 11 guns, Razon said he and PNP Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. has ordered the report investigated.

Police records showed that Jaworski has 11 firearms registered in his name. Four 9-mm pistols, a .45-cal. Barretta pistol, a .45-cal. submachine and a shotgun are registered under the name Brian D. Jaworski, and a 555 Colt and three .22 cal. pistols are under the name Ryan Joseph S. Jaworski.

A civilian is normally allowed only a short and a long firearm.

Tony Yap, Elton's father, has four guns registered in his name. They include a 9-mm pistol, a 38 cal. pistol, a 12 gauge shotgun and a 5.56 cal. gun, police records showed.

The license for Yap's shotgun expired on March 16, 2003.

Mark Yap, Elton's brother, has a licensed Colt .45 cal. pistol and another .45 cal. pistol. The licenses have not expired to date, records showed.

WHEN Neil meets Dinky at the Cabinet meeting, all appears well and their encounter is described by witnesses as "extended."

Cabinet turns to humor, prayer amid fiscal crisis

From page A1

anxiety for her Cabinet colleagues. "But we may all successfully find ways to live with it—cut small budget allocations and still deliver results expected of our agencies.

"Most of all, we pray also for our President that she may accomplish her third legacy with the wholehearted support of Congress, her Cabinet, the grassroots force and the Filipino people," Bunye said.

The government is struggling to keep the budget deficit within the full-year target of P146 billion, or 4.1 percent of the gross domestic product. Heavy election spending pushed the deficit to P77.4 billion in May, just 95 billion away from the government's target deficit for the first six months of the year.

Doubts

Analysts have raised doubts the government would be able to meet its target deficit for the full year. The government announced last month it would absorb the P500-billion debt of National Power Corp. (NAPOCOR) as additions of P146 billion to additional taxes charged by government agencies. (More stories on the proposed budget and budget deficit in Business, Page B1.)

Vice President Noli de Castro and outgoing Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman showed up at the Cabinet meeting with only a hint of their bitter conflict over the disbursement of Social Welfare and Development portfolio.

"She was very animated and participated (well) in the Cabinet meeting. A couple of times she spoke with the Vice President," Ricardo Saludo, the deputy presidential spokesperson and Cabinet secretary, said of Soliman.

"The Vice President was there, too, and he was very active in the discussion," Saludo said. He did not say, though, what ideas De Castro contributed during the Cabinet deliberations on proposed government revisions.

And two days ago, Soliman was fully announced her resignation after Mr. Bunye told her on June 29 that she had promised the DSWD post to De Castro.

Everybody happy

During her press conference, Soliman said she felt betrayed because Mr. Bunye had earlier assured her that she was considering appointing De Castro as head of the National Anti-Poverty Commission, and not as DSWD secretary.

"We started off on a happy note because in her prayer, Secretary Bunye[illegible] announced what should be done in balance the budget. So everybody was happy," Saludo said. With a report from AFP

SC orders Court of Appeals ...

From page A1

cases automatically sent for review to the high tribunal, which also handled appeals of convicts sentenced by lower courts to life imprisonment or reclusion perpetua.

This was "wise and compelling ... in remove tension circumspection," the high court said.

The court noted that it had modified the sentence...and sometimes acquitted the accused—in more than 70 percent of the death penalty cases it reviewed since capital punishment was restored in 1993.

Under the new ruling, if the CA affirms the penalty of death, reclusion perpetua (40 years), or life imprisonment, it could render judgment and impose the corresponding penalty but it should then elevate the entire records of the case to the Supreme Court for final disposition.

The 20-page decision penned by Associate Justice Jose Vitug explained: "Where life and liberty are at stake, all possible avenues in determining guilt or innocence must be searched in accused, and no case in the evaluation of the facts can ever be overdone. A prior determination by the Court of Appeals on, particularly, the factual issues, would minimize the possibility of an error of judgment."

If the CA acquits the appellant, they he is freed and the prosecution would no longer have any recourse in the high court, said lawyer Ismael Khan Jr., the tribunal's public information chief.

The high court set the new appeals procedure after reviewing the case of Efren G. Mateo, who was sentenced by a lower court in Tarlac to 40 years imprisonment for allegedly raping his 15-year-old stepdaughter. The case was remanded by the CA on account of the victim's counsel's inexperience.

Mateo's case demonstrated a "typical dilemma," that it had repeatedly faced in sentencing review cases, the court said, since it was the LA that had the "direct manifest" to review facts.

From 1993 until last month, the lower courts imposed capital punishment in 1,493 cases. Of the total 907 sentenced on the, the judgment of death was affirmed in only 186 cases, or 20.5% percent.

In an "astounding" 71.77 percent of the cases, the high court said, the sentences was either "modified or reversed." This compares to a total of 65.1 appellants saved from lethal injection, out of which 63 were acquitted.

"Modification" in 64.61 percent of the cases examined was from of sentence to life term's retained for further proceedings. The next said it reduced the death sentence to reclusion perpetua in "no less than 460 cases," or 33.23 percent.

RP driver abducted, faces beheading in Iraq

SPECIAL arrow to the Middle East Roy Cimatu gave a pep talk to the 51 men Philippine humanitarian contingent in their barracks at Camp Anaconda in Iraq last May. (AFP)

recently traveled to Iraq. He declined to give the reason name, but said he's "connected to Baghdad and in Qatar" but I also confirmed the abduction.

But apart from ordering a stop to the deployment of more Filipino workers to Iraq, earlier in the day and then convening an emergency meeting of her security officials in dinner who arrive to take, the President is engaged in a waiting game.

She was awaiting word from Ambassador Noe Cimatu, whom she dispatched to Iraq to verify the hostage-taking and to seek the help of Iraqi authorities in obtaining the hostage's release.

Paramount concern

"The President's paramount concern is saving Filipino lives. Be pray that no harm comes to our countrymen," her spokesperson Ignacio Bunye told reporters yesterday afternoon after the emergency meeting of the Cabinet Oversight Committee on Internal Security (Ceis) in Malacañang.

"We will explore all avenues to obtain the release of the hostage," Bunye said at the briefing also attended by Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas and Foreign Undersecretary Jose Brillantes.

Despite the hostage-taker's threat, Bunye said there was still "no basis" to pull out the 51 member Philippine humanitarian contingent sent to Iraq in support of the US-led operations there.

"There is no basis to pull them out because right now in place, the details are still being determined by ... Cimatu," Ermita said.

Policy

He said the Philippine contingent would operate Iraq 30 to stay in Iraq and would not say whether the abduction of a Filipino would influence this pullout date.

"It's very hard to make a statement because this is a policy," he said, adding:

"The President's decision and, surely would be based on the recommendation of ... Cimatu, on the Ceis and if the meeting again tomorrow because we are expecting developments, especially within the 72 hours period, [given by the hostage-taker]."

4 and 40

Cimatu heads the Philippine government's inter-agency Iraq team.

Labor Undersecretary Manuel Imson said the name Angelito de la Cruz had come up in the deadline of both the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration and the Department of Foreign Affairs.

But the POEA list had less Filipinos listed with that name, and the DFA list had 40.

POEA Administrator Rosalinda Baldoz said the Angelito de la Cruzes were listed as truck drivers, a mechanic, an electrician and a "mechanic-equipment."

Labor Secretary Sto. Tomas said their search of about 120 firms based in Saudi Arabia showed that four Filipino drivers had been reported missing.

"We're thinking our search in equipment operators and drivers. Once [the hostage] is identified, we will talk to his family," she said.

But Sto. Tomas said they still had to verify if the four were actually missing or just "roaring somewhere."

Bunye said ABC News channel that the Filipino was abducted in the town of Fallujah by militants linked to the Islamic Army of Iraq.

Bunye said he would meet with leaders in the area to learn more details about the hostage while assuring Cimatu's arrival.

Fair game

There are about 4,200 Filipinos working in mechanics, cooks and at other jobs in US military installations across Iraq.

"They've become fair game for terrorists," Bunye Bunye, a spokesperson for the overseas Filipino workers' alliance, Migrante international, told The Associated Press.

Migrante chair Connie Bragas-Regalado said Ms Arroyo "should not dilly-dally in saving the life of a Filipino worker ... [and] should order the pullout [of Philippine troops] now."

"We have told the Philippine government time and again that Filipinos are unsafe in Iraq. We are sorry events," Regalado said. She said Ms Arroyo's "hand-headstrong" had resulted in the death of three Filipinos in Iraq.

Regalado pointed out that when an American and a South Korean were kidnapped, the hostage in Iraqi militants, their governments did not pull out their respective troops and the hostages were subsequently beheaded.

"The President can take this as a case to immediately decide to pull out the [Philippine contingent] and eventually all Filipinos in Iraq," she said.

Bolanta Reyes Jr., spokesperson of the militant Bayan Muntinlupa Mobilization for the abduction of Jie in Cruz confirmed the group's fear that Ms Arroyo's "blind support" for the US-led campaign in Iraq would endanger the lives of Filipinos there and in the rest of the Middle East.

"[The presence of Filipino troops is] risking [volunteer] given the current situation. They are merely there to provide political support for an illegal occupation," Reyes said.

Ban on deployment

Labor Secretary Sto. Tomas said the President had ordered an immediate stop to the deployment of Filipino workers to Iraq pending the resolution of the crisis.

She said about 1,200 Filipinos set to fly to Iraq had been told to postpone their departure until the problem had been solved.

She also said the Filipino workers to Iraq had been advised to take "extreme caution."

The ban on deployment to Iraq was announced yesterday morning and announced by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration in the afternoon.

The 1,200 Iraq-bound OFWs were already at the departure lounge of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport when they were informed of the ban. The first batch was to have left at 2 p.m. yesterday and the second batch at 8 p.m.

"We had notified the manpower agencies concerning the ban and told them to advise their workers not go to the airport anymore," POEA Chairman told reporters.

Tea leaf

But the worries came too late.

Manny Gedaet, press relations officer of the Angle-European International Placement Services, said the workers were mostly operators, mechanics, logistics staff and inventory clerks.

He said they were recruited by Prime Projects, a Dubai-based company, and were to have been deployed to Camp Victory, a US military camp.

Chito Avelin, president of Angle-European, said he reacted to the ban on deployment.

"The latest job creation of the government is causing more OFWs to lose jobs because the company's usage as a reliable manpower supplier ... It's a pity [that] the ban was imposed] when the workers were set to leave. [The workers have] waited for the past two months to work ... To us, and to a new message forwarded by Gaeta to reporters.

At press time, however, ABC correspondent that the workers had been allowed to fly to Dubai and wait for further developments there.

Gedaet said thousands of job applicants had been lining up for work in Iraq.

He said about 400 workers, mostly on vacation in the Philippines when the initial ban on deployment to Iraq was imposed in April, returned to the war-torn country last week.

Presumed nationality

Early yesterday afternoon, Foreign Secretary Delia Albert said no negotiations could be undertaken until the hostage's nationality had been confirmed.

But Malaya said reporters by phone from Baghdad that he was "95 percent sure" that the hostage was a Filipino, and that the Philippine government had no choice but to ensure this.

"Even if we're not on same, we have to presume that he is a Filipino," Embayo said. "Because if he is beheaded, and it turns out that he is not a Filipino, we are still reeling about it. There would surely be big repercussions."

Embayo said Al-Jazeera, which had earlier aired exclusive videos of foreigners held hostage by Iraqi militants, would "not consider a member on a broad like" the hostage's nationality.

"They know how to deal with this thing," he said.

Negotiations

Albert said that should the hostage turn out to be a Filipino, Cimatu would conduct the negotiations together with Embayo.

"The President has instructed Cimatu to work out on with [Ms Albert], who was very successful in negotiating for the release of the [Filipino] driver some months ago," she said, referring to the incident based Francisco Pagsolingan, a truck driver who was with a group abducted in April, and who was subsequently released without demands.

Reyes said Cimatu and its deputy would again meet the help of an official of the Iraqi Governing Council to intercede for the release of the hostage. With a report from Norman Bordadora

GMA urged to slash pork barrel

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over the lawmakers.

"The government is most concerned with the abuses being enjoyed by the rich and special privileged groups ... and many all the tax perks that serve as a big hole that put down the drain all the taxes collected by the government," Ibarra-Gutierrez told at an economic forum in Davao City on Wednesday.

"We can put certain funds for pro-poor projects in nine priority areas in the country, but the pork barrel should no longer be as big as it is now," he said.

In his Malacañang briefing, Wise was silent on the lawmakers' pork barrel. Instead, she said she hopes Congress will approve the budget for the government.

Ibarra-Gutierrez said the lawmakers' pork barrel is a source of kickbacks for legislators whose pet projects are funded by the nation's budget.

Wise stressed focused his talk on the administration's plan to shift to gross income taxation, which has some under fire from big business and the International Monetary Fund.

"The state, in the course of 10 to 15 years, is rebuilding the infamous lifestyle of some executives and rich families and this is what we want to close," he said.

Tax perks

Wise said a typical rich household spends anywhere between P1 million and P3 million a month for travel, limited entertaining pools, medical benefits, entertainment and education, and household help for all these household expenses, according to him, are charged to family-owned corporations.

"If we have to have it be unfair tax payments by 10 percent for a P1 million travel expenses, the state subsidized what we're the same of 1990,000 which is money out of ordinary taxpayers," Wise said.

Single tax rate

In her June 30 inaugural address, Ms Arroyo indicated that her administration would be tougher on those who have it and that on those who have it rough already."

Under the proposed gross income tax scheme of the Department of Finance, all corporations and self-employed individuals or professionals like doctors and movie actors shall be subject to a single tax rate based on their income.

The DOF said a gross income tax would be simpler to administer, help improve tax collection and reduce the tax burden on salaried workers who account for a big chunk of the taxes paid.

Now, under the present tax rate scale would range from 15 percent to 25 percent. He also said the government had set to double on what expenses could be considered as part of cost of sales.

But Ibarra-Gutierrez says that the government would modify its gross income tax system to suit each business. For example, a company in an industry that has huge assets and loans might be allowed to include loan payments as part of its tax deductions.

On the DOF's warning that the gross income tax was risky and would not lead to higher revenues, Wise said: "The DOF was just opposed to the idea in principle. If might just be giving its opinion without looking at the potential or the details that we are going into."

Argentina

In Davao City, Santelices warned that the country would become another Argentina should the government fail to deal with its worsening budget deficit and mounting debt. The Latin American country suffered a financial crisis in 2001.

He pointed out that the ratio of the Philippine public sector debt to its gross domestic product—a measure of a government's ability to raise taxes to pay off its debts—had reached nearly 6 percent.

"This is already too close to the country's 5-7 percent [ratio of public sector debt to GDP] in 2001," Santelices said.

He said the Arroyo administration must put the houses in order and adopt harsh measures. His scrapping tax perks enjoyed by big corporations, removing investment incentives and scrapping the pork barrel of Congress.

Such measures, according to Santelices, appeared more sound than imposing new taxes.

"You cannot just go on collecting taxes without scrapping those tax incentives you give to privileged groups," he said.

GMA support key to Senate presidency fight

Turn to page A17

crucial choice.

Senator Arroyo had earlier said that there being a "remarkable" majority in the Senate, there was no need for it to enter into a coalition with the minority.

When the 13th Congress opens, the Senate will have 14 majority senators against eight minority senators.

Villar had disagreed with Senator Arroyo's proposal, saying that under the Constitution, the new Senate President should have the vote of 13 of the total 23 senators.

Asked whether Drilon or Villar had enough his support, Pimentel replied in the negative.

But he said two minority senators had been approached and had rejected the overtures. He did not name names.

Pimentel said the minority senators rejected the overtures because they did not like the general idea of the offer made to them—that they would have the chairmanship of certain committees in exchange for their support.

Numbers

According to a senator who requested anonymity, Drilon "rotated" his proposal with Villar to provide political support for an illegal occupation," Reyes said.

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Antismoking law not catching fire

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local government, barangay and police officials on the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of Republic Act (RA) 9211 or the Tobacco Regulation Act (TRA).

Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit said at a press conference on Wednesday that the public knew "very little" about the IRR—so little, he said, that many of them were often unwittingly violators themselves.

The TRA was signed into law in February last year, but few enforcement retreats in the dark.

The blast of info

Dayrit said this could be because the IRR was finalized only last March and should have been implemented in April. "That's why we had the elections, so this is essentially the first blast of information."

Representatives of the Department of Health, Department of Justice, Metro Manila Development Authority and the Philippine National Police gathered at the GOMBURZ for an alliance-building conference led by the Philippine Consortium on Tobacco Control Alliance-Philippines (PCAP).

According to them, among the most frequently violated of the IRR's salient provisions is the sanction on the advertisement or sale of cigarettes and other tobacco products within 100 meters of playgrounds, schools, recreational centers and other youth facilities.

Outside of this perimeter, sellers should still make sure youth-led-looking buyers are above 18 years old, by demanding to see identification cards. It follows that minors are therefore not allowed to sell tobacco products. Those who do will be arrested or fined, along with those who buy from them.

No-smoking areas

In fact, in a perfect world as penned by RA 9211, there will be practically no adult smokers left, writers. Or at least they will hardly ever be seen, as the law prohibits smoking in most public places:

+ Airports, ship terminals and docks, taxis and bus stations.

+ Elevators and stairwells.

+ Public or private hospital buildings and premises.

+ In theaters, and conference halls, except where there is a designated smoking area.

+ Within where food or beverage is prepared or manufactured.

+ Locations such the basketball match to pay a distance and arrange areas for nonsmokers' interests.

Even cigarette vending machines have been outlawed.

Marilyn Lorenzo, director of the Institute of Health Policy and Development Studies, said 26 of the 31 cities all over the country had local ordinances against smoking—some were decades old—but the country had been apprehended because those were not being implemented.

For instance, she said, Lapu-Lapu City has had one for 16 years. Cebu City enacted its own ordinance in 1996. Quezon City in 1985, and Baguio City in 1988.

Davao, Makati

Only Davao and Makati cities

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RETURNING to Mandaue City after seven months of living royally in Riyadh is not exactly a sweet homecoming for Carina Macas (left) and her sons Princess Jose and Princess Mac.

After living in a palace, twins may have no home

giving party for the successful 20-hour operation of the twins at the King Abdul Aziz Medical City in the Saudi capital of Riyadh.

The nine-month-old twins who were formerly joined at the abdomen and pelvis were brought to Saudi Arabia, with their mother and aunt in January for the expensive surgery which reportedly cost Prince Abdullah $120,000.

But Osmeña had bad news yesterday. The Macas couple is among the 40 families in Sunrise Upper Uptown who have been ordered to vacate their houses.

The site of the Rivera house used to be owned by the family of ousted Mandaue City Councilor Saul Cabahug who had allowed informal settlers to live on it.

Last year, however, the Cabahug family sold the property to lawyer Augusto Go, the owner of the University of Cebu.

Since the area was located at the back of the IC campus in Mandaue, Go is planning to use the newly acquired property for his school's expansion.

Osmeña said Go had ordered the residents, including the Macas, to leave last December but the relocation had yet to be implemented.

Relocation site

Osmeña said she was trying to help the affected families secure a relocation site, in either Barangays Canduman or Tingub, also in Mandaue.

However, every affected family must pay a P12,000 deposit for their new lots.

Mandaue City Mayor Tadeo Osmeña, for his part, said he could not provide immediate help to the soon-to-be evicted families in Barangay Opao because they are staying in a private lot.

Housing program

Osmeña said the residents must first organize a group and then identify the area where they would relocate to so that the city government would help them avail of the housing program of the Home Mutuale Financing Corp.

Osmeña said the city government could serve as guarantee for the residents, if they could not pay the HMFC.

Osmeña said the city government was also prepared to provide livelihood training programs for the relocated families.

Inocky as singling out the Macas family for assistance, the mayor said the city could use all but to build not more than the P20,000 he had already given them before they left for Saudi Arabia.

P500K aid

Joy Osmeña, the mayor's sister, said that the barangay treasurer of Opao would remit P5,000 in financial assistance to the Macas family.

Special attention, according to Osmeña, cannot be given to the Macas twin as a free relocation site as it would antagonize the other evictees.

Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

Gov't suspends mining on Mt. De Oro

DAVAO CITY—The national government has ordered a seven-and-a-half month stop to mining operations in the gold-rush area of Mt. De Oro in Blaan, Compostela Valley, Environment Secretary Elisea Gozun said yesterday.

Gozun said that small-scale miners were given two weeks to resume mining yesterday to dismantle their tunnels and to stop the scouring of trees in the area.

Gozun said reporters here she personally convinced the color miners in Mindanao warned of an impending disaster should mining continue on Mt. De Oro.

The MGB said the soil in the area has become very soft that tunnels dug to search for gold would easily collapse.

The agency said the increasing number of people flocking to the area was worsening the situation.

As of last count, authorities placed the number of prospectors on De Oro at 6,000 since news that gold is easily mined there went around in late May.

After it issued the warning, the MGB reported that several tunnels had collapsed on Mt. De Oro but no one was harmed.

Gozun said the law enforcement agencies have been deployed to raid chainsaws, dynamite and mills, and close down the tunnels in the area.

Checkpoints were also established to intercept shipments of mercury and other hazardous chemicals, firearms and explosives and to acquire rates of people.

Gozun said the government wants to prevent disorder in the area by regulating the mining activities.

She said miners were told their operations would continue after the issuance of permits.

Earlier, concerned government agencies and miners crafted a plan of action detailing the legal issuance of mining operations in the area.

Other activities include the start of a geo-hazard mapping plan, a project assigned to the National Mapping and Resources Information Authority, and the settlement of the boundary zone among municipalities near Mt. De Oro. Ancheta S. Alibada, PIA Mindanao Bureau

AFTER THE RAIN
A rainbow appears in the sky above Baguio's downtown traffic, rushing the ghosts cast by clouds over the country's mountain resort.

Roundup

3 kids drown off Masbate

LUSON CITY—Three children died and three persons were rescued when two others were still missing after a wood-hulled vessel was overturned by rough seas in the waters of Masbate on June 20. Seaman first class Rosevie Mangayam, duty operations personnel of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) Legazpi District office, identified those found dead on July 1 as Ruben Villanio, 6, Mhel Villanio, 5, and Jacob Ravelo Villanio, 4, all of Barangay Bohuan, Uson, Masbate. Rescued were Paulo Carcuel T. Villanio, Sperie P. Villanio and Ma. Felina Villanio. Two passengers were still missing, including Rosalie T. Villanio who is believed to be the father of the children, and a still unidentified person. Mangayam said the victims left Uson Island at about 4:30 p.m. June 20 aboard a small banca, which never reached Masbate City as the vessel and time and the victims were spotted only at 9 a.m. the next day by fisherman Edgar Cadena floating in the coastal waters of Pilar, near Sitio Igpe, Masbate City. Cadena brought the four survivors and their bancas to the barangay chair of Silangan. The bodies of the three children were brought by fishermen to the San Fernando health center for autopsy. Rommel Ongoc, PIA Southern Luzon Bureau

Rebel killed in Misamis

CLARIN, Misamis Occidental—An unidentified member of the New People's Army was killed in an encounter with government troops in Barangay Bonifacio, Sta. Cruz, Misamis Occidental on Wednesday morning, Col. Fernando Mesa, head of the Army 204th Brigade, said the rebel was with a group of 12 armed men conducting "hasle-in and educational tours" in the mountainous village. He said the hasle-in is upon seeing the government troops, that at the soldiers, starting a gunfight that lasted for about 30 minutes. "The rebels withdrew to the immediate other they saw that they were overpowered. They left behind one dead and one wounded," Mesa said in a press interview. Recovered from the scene were the M-16 rifle, a couple of the slain rebel, several rounds of ammunition and a backpack containing personal belongings and subversive documents. Marlon Ramos, PIA Southern Luzon Bureau

Japanese found dead

CLARIN, Misamis Occidental—Police found the decomposing body of a Japanese national inside his apartment in a subdivision in Barangay Don Jose, Sta. Rosa, Laguna. Police said they found Hideki Kubo, Saito, a native of Tokyo, living in Sitio Ilaya, Barangay Don Jose in Sta. Rosa, Laguna. Members of the Sta. Rosa Police Station 4 conducted a follow-up operation after receiving several complaints from residents that there's was emanating from the victim's house, which the victim was visiting for PM 2000 to month. When they arrived, they found the victim's body inside his room with a rope around his neck. Police had ruled out foul play in the death of Saito, who used to work as manager of the former Japan Tire Japanese Manufacturing Corp. in the subdivision, prior to his resignation last year. "Police are not questionable marks or wounds to his body to suspect foul play in the case," Police Senior Inspector Rodolfo Mendoza, chief of the Sta. Rosa Police Station 4, said. But he also said waiting for the results of the autopsy, "to verify whether he died of a natural cause." Marlon Ramos, PIA Southern Luzon Bureau

Hailstorm returns after years

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—Residents here were glad to their windows for 10 minutes shortly after noon on Thursday to witness the first hailstorm in modern times to hit the town.

They drew their children into their garages and stayed indoors to avoid marble-sized stones that fell on their yards and on streets and farms.

"It was like the scene in the movie 'Day After Tomorrow.' People take great say here only remember hailstones from their parents' stories. The temperature in La Trinidad used to be cooler and we had frequent hailstorms, or so we are told," a mother of three told the bureau.

But in olden times, residents feared hailstorm because their fragile crops destroyed their vegetables and other crops.

Farmers still dread the Christmas season because cold winds bring this crop, bring frost in valleys and cause farms in the towns of Baguio and Itogon.

The bureau learned that Thursday's hailstorm had no affected Baguio town.

Efren Aquino, weather observer of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa), said, they have not yet recorded the phenomenon.

However, he has documented rare of hailstorm in the Cordillera was in Baguio in 1985. Vincent Cabreza will a report from Aya Santos-Lorenzo in the northern Luzon bureau

Dike repair in Pampanga town rushed

MABALACAT, Pampanga—Workers on Thursday rushed the repair of the Quitangil Dike in Barangay San Francisco here and pushed up the damaged portion with sand before rains hamper the work again and threaten the lives of some 500 families.

Two bulldozers were seen scraping sand from the river's middle to reinforce the dike on the banks to contain the expected overflow.

Ramon Aquino, Department of Public Works and Highways Central Luzon director, said his agency was sending a bulldozer to the site to work on a second project near the foot of the Quitangil Bridge. The national government built this in 1997 at a cost of P30 million, it was learned.

Aquino said there was a need to fix the water diverting from the nearby Clark Special Economic Zone.

He said the current should be diverted toward the middle reaches so there would have to be dredging and flood control along the Sacobia River. By doing this, he said water would steer clear of the dike's base.

Despite the damage, which was estimated by Mayor Marino Morales at P25 million, no local official or private group has called for a need to investigate the Clark Development Corp. for what seemed to be faulty construction work, Beverly Ornido, PIA Central Luzon Desk

US-led antiterror training set to start

ZAMBOANGA CITY—It's all systems go for the staging of the joint RP-US military exercise scheduled this month in Central, North Cotabato, which according to military and civilian authorities would be "brief" and "purely training on anti-terrorism."

The training would be run in three weeks and probably commence next week or the week after, said Lt. Col. Franklin del Prado, civil-military affairs chief of the Army's 6th Infantry Division.

There will be no unloading of heavy military equipment or the arming to of American aircraft, unlike in previous exercises held in Zamboanga, Basilan and Isabela in Mindanao and in Luzon, Del Prado said.

Security sections of North Cotabato and those from nearby provinces have expressed apprehension that the exercise might lead to clashes between troops, communist and Moro rebels.

North Cotabato, bounded by the provinces of Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Sultan Kudarat and Davao del Sur, is sparsely inhabited by the communist New People's Army and the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front, suspected of sheltering the Jemaah Islamiyah, a Southeast Asian terror group allied with Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda.

But the training exercise by Filipino and American soldiers might spark a renewed war with the insurgents in the area was the anxiety of some rural folk.

"It won't happen here," assured North Cotabato Gov. Emmanuel Pinol, stating the event would be purely training Filipino soldiers on ways to fight terrorists.

"There will be no military operation against the enemies of the state, and Pinol, referring to what happened in Basilan and Jolo, is where training troops had launched a pursuit operation against the Abu Sayyaf, a group engaged in kidnapping and terrorism.

He said recipients of the training would come from the 39th and 40th Army battalions of the 602nd infantry brigade based in Camp Siongco.

Apart from the usual military training, the group along with 70 to 80 American trainers, will also conduct civic action work in two depressed villages of Carmen, the governor said.

There will be no prosecution or offensive that would trigger fighting between troops and rebel forces in the province, Pinol said.

"Somali kinatayan is all in the papers," Pinol, in a Cebuano-Visayan pun, said, adding that he has yet to see the "actual presence and operation of this terrorist group," in his province.

Pinol said even reports of Abu Sayyaf leader Khadaffy Janjalani allegedly moving around his area is "also a report from the paper," saying there was no evidence on his presence in the province. Charlie U. Señase, Julie S. Alipala and Jeffrey M. Tupas, PIA Mindanao Bureau

Firm seeks ouster of Baguio mayor over parking fees

BAGUIO CITY—A pay-parking firm here asked President Macapagal-Arroyo to remove Mayor Braulio Yaranon from office for "abusing his authority" when he ordered the police to help evict him who would refuse to pay their parking fees in the firm.

Indigent Parking Systems Corp., a five-year-old firm, also petitioned the Supreme Court on Thursday to stop Yaranon in contempt for forcing the public to disobey a pay-parking ordinance that is a endorsing.

It also asked the court to stop Yaranon's order and to declare him.

Lawyer Emilio Gaya, Indigent's counsel, said the tribunal is reviewing a regional trial court ruling that validated Indigent's contract, but which the city council that earned from 2002 to 2003 had suspended before the Court of Appeals, and later, the SC.

Indigent was contracted to install 24 computerized pay-parking machines and to supervise the pay-parking operations in the city. The contract is sanctioned by Ordinance 093-2000, which regulates parking in the city.

Yaranon, a former La Union judge, issued Executive Order 001-2004 on July 1 to assure that no private firm can act in law enforcer, prosecutor, judge and government treasurer in enforcing city laws.

Indigent violates this local government code prescription because it judges that a motorist violates a law prohibits the motorist by immobilizing his vehicle, and then it tests and collects the penalties," he said.

He told reporters here that he was "willing to go to jail for preserving our rights."

But Yaranon assured the business that his order made no clause rules, cases in the merits of the city's contract Indigent's covering its contract.

"I am merely the chief law enforcer who will present the people's rights, (which is, in this case,) their right to due process. In dealing with a motorist who refuses to pay Indigent's fees, the first must file a blotter report, present the complaint before a prosecutor and get it filed before the courts, which will judge whether the motorist must pay a fine or not," he said. Vincent Cabreza and Donna Domerille, PIA Northern Luzon Bureau

A PARKING attendant and a police officer could only sit and watch as vehicles jampack Baguio City's busiest street, Session Road.

SUERTRES 3 6 9
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METRO

E-mail us: ... Chief Editor Carmen B. Pilar, Exec. Ed. Dyan Castillejo

Death for Niño Calinao's triggerman; 2 freed

NEAR Calinao cradles a picture of her son Nino at the Quezon City Regional Trial Court yesterday. With her is husband Hardito.

THREE of the accused in the Calinao murder (from left): Reonaro Al-Bakkir Loquish, Omar Hadjalis, and Reonardson Rasin.

By Tina Santos

AFTER five years, Nena Calinao got the news she had waited for the longest time.

"It was an answered prayer. God has granted the justice I had been seeking," Nena said as she slept soundly after she heard the guilty verdict read for Reonarsonzien Rasiin Jr., one of the four accused in the killing of her son Niño, a University of the Philippines student, by the Quezon City Regional Trial Court.

Rasiin now faces a death sentence.

Reonaro Al-Bakkir Loquish and Omar Hadjalis were acquitted of the crime after the prosecution failed to establish their criminal culpability.

Abed Sauri Lumasanar, one of the accused, was released in December last year for lack of evidence.

Not giving up

Although Nena, who brought a framed photograph of her son in the court yesterday, said she was happy with the judge's decision, she added that she would not give up running after the masterminds who has not been caught.

Calinao was a 22-year-old graduating journalism student of the University of the Philippines when he was killed on Feb. 16, 1999 on the stairwell wall of the Arts and Sciences Building in Diliman, Quezon City. He was with his fellow Ateneo Blue Ball Club members running the registration booth for the club's sports quiz show when was shot four times by Rasiin.

Mistaken identity

Rasiin was given the death penalty after the court found out that there was evidence preponderance and treachery in the commission of the crime.

He was also ordered to pay Calinao's heirs a total of P677,000 in moral and actual damages.

Investigators believed that Calinao was mistaken for a member of the Sigma Rho fraternity involved in a rumble with the Sigma Rho, another fraternity, a week before the shooting incident.

Three during that scuffle was Sigma Rho member Simon Mina, son of Pangasinan lawmaker Federico Mina, and a student of the UP College of Human Kinetics.

Abbas' name consistently cropped up in the police investigation as one of the possible suspects and the probable mastermind.

Little evidence

However, the police admitted that the only piece of evidence that could link Abbas to the killing was a witness account that he was with the other suspects in the university days before the murder.

Calinao was active in church activities and was not even a member of any fraternity in UP.

He had been a consistent honor student since grade school, and was well-loved not only by his school mates but in the Las Piñas village, where the Calinaos reside.

Across years, about 5,000 UP students, and some professors had walked out of their classes to protest what they called the "slow process" in the investigation of the murder that had gained nationwide attention.

The Calinaos' lawyer, Benjamin Pagdigan, said he would urge the police to dig deeper into the case that could lead to the arrest of the masterminds, adding that Rasiin "would not have acted on his own."

Relief on way for Baseco folks

By Leila B. Salaverria

RELIEF on the way.

This was the reassurance of Manila health department officials yesterday to residents of the gutted Baseco compound in Port Area, Manila, as they promised to provide them with adequate health care soon.

Thousands of Baseco residents lost their homes in a fire that almost leveled the compound in January. The fire, the most destructive of the area so far, forced around 4,500 families to live in makeshift tents, use chemical sanitation vans that served as evacuation centers.

The assistance came after international groups and Baseco residents complained that living conditions in the centers had been difficult with the heat, floods, unsanitary conditions and the threat of disease.

The Manila Health Department's Dr. David Pinto, who oversees the health situation in the compound, said he had received several residents about proper hygiene, and poisoning and overloading the barrels of diseases like measles, diarrhea, pneumonia and other food and waterborne illnesses.

Still, he also said it would be better if more physicians and nurses are assigned to

Fearless forecast: Next world pool champ will be a Filipino

CLEAN LIVING

Manuel R. Aligo

DENVER: the world pool match marking the 40th and final leg of the Asian 9-Ball Billiards Tour in Robinsons Galleria, one of the game's leading producers "From the field of participants will emerge the next champion of the [illegible] World Pool Championship in Taiwan."

I agree with Efren but not entirely.

For only players are better than before for all times, especially a Filipino, to win the 2004 World Pool Championship slated at the World Trade Center in Taipei on July 10-18.

Why did I say a Filipino will prevail? It's merely because Filipino players have trained hard and travelled far, not to mention the financial and moral support that their benefactors—Pinoy and Pepsi of Pepsi Sports—have given them.

The Philippines will be represented by a formidable combination of youth and experience. The fabled Efren "Bata" Reyes, who won the World Pool Championship in Cardiff in 1999, and world No. 1 Francisco "Django" Bustamante and Jose "Nitong" Parica are the veterans while the returning Alex Pagulayan and Ramon Gil "Lee Van Corona," who are both 25 years old, are the brightest among the young title prospects.

Reyes is the most dominant player among the local bets. Reyes, who will be 50 years old on Aug. 26, is a (twice) pool champion who makes redemption at the table with his awesome safeties and magical shots. His Angeles City native first did the country proud in 1994 when he became the only non-American winner of the US Open. Reyes is a three-time World 9-Ball champion, a SEA Games gold medal winner in Jakarta in 1987 and Bangkok in 1999, the PBA (Philippine Sportswriters Association) Athlete of the Year in 1999, and recipient of the Philippine Legion of Honor.

A native of Malabon, Tadao, the then-former Pennsylvania was also named the world's No. 1 player in 1998, when he topped the Sandstone Cuesport Pro Billiards Tour in the United States. Now based in Germany, the 39-year-old Bustamante emerged the sport's leading money winner in 2003 with total winnings of more than $130,000. With his extraordinary long reach and booming breaks, Bustamante won many major tournaments, among them the Australia 2000 Japan Open and the 2001 World Pool Masters in Essex, United Kingdom, where he outclassed legendary world champion Earl "The Pearl" Strickland of the United States. Strickland got his revenge, however, when he beat a grieving Bustamante, who was playing despite the death of his youngest daughter, in the semi-losing finals of the World Pool Championship in 2003.

An integral member of the Pepsi Sports Team, the 24-year-old Parica was once considered the best Filipino billiards player before Reyes and Bustamante grabbed the limelight.

Now residing in California, Parica made his presence felt in the US in 1998 when he upset the legendary Nick Varner, 13-10. Then in 1997, Parica, a holder of an associate degree in engineering from Mapua Tech, was named Player of the Year of the United Pro Tour, pocketing a bonus prize of $50,000. After an absence of many years, Parica came back in 2003 and nearly won the first US Open title, losing to Jeremy Jones in the finals. Lady in his career, Parica won the Taipei International Cup in 1998 and the Peace Cup in 1995.

With their vast experience and proven forms, Parica, Reyes and Bustamante are expected to provide leadership and stability to the Philippine team.

Corteza, who beat Reyes in the finals of the fifth and last leg of the Asian 9-Ball Tour in Robinsons Galleria, and PA-Canadian Pagulayan, who finished runner-up to Corteza's Thursday's Robinsons in the finals of the 2003 World Pool Championship in Cardiff, will also play key roles together with veteran representatives Warren Kiamco, Ronnie "Boboying" Gallego, Marlon Manalo, Rodolfo Luat, Antonio "Medoy" Lining of Calapan City Dermal Missions, and Cebu's defensive "Gaga" Galicia. At press time, Ramon Ovalles and Candy Valle were still playing in qualifying matches in Taipei.

The World Pool Championship has been held in Cardiff, Wales, the last two years. Taipei was decided to host the annual event after paying a franchise fee of $1 million. Manufacturers Queens Landmark of Taiwan, England, is the promoter of this tournament.

SWIM SENSATION

Phelps sinks record

PHELPS exercises his world record-breaking swim in the 400-m IM. AP PHOTO

LONG BEACH, California—America's Michael Phelps took the first step toward his quest to equal or surpass Mark Spitz's seven Olympic gold-medal haul with a new 400-meter individual medley world record on Wednesday.

The 19-year-old triple world record holder clocked 4:08.41 on the 3rd day of the US Olympic trials to lower the 4:08.99 standard he set at last year's World Championships in Barcelona.

After trailing his world record pace by 0.12 seconds through the first 100 m of butterfly, Phelps moved ahead of the former world pace and kept increasing his margin.

Phelps' splits for the four 100-meter laps: 57.56 seconds for the butterfly, 1:02.09 for the backstroke, 1:12.80 for the breaststroke and 57.96 for the freestyle leg.

The record-breaking performance was not his only outstanding swim of the morning as Phelps' 22-year old North Baltimore teammate, Kevin Hall, set a US Open record in winning the women's 400-m individual medley in 4:37.67. His time was also the fastest in the world this year. Reuters

Armstrong snatches Tour yellow jersey

ARCOS, France—Lance Armstrong knows there's only one place where the leader's yellow jersey really counts in the Tour de France—on the back on the Champs-Elysees on July 25.

"We're not going to sacrifice the team to defend the yellow jersey in the north of France. The time to work and defend begins in the Pyrenees," Armstrong said Wednesday.

The five-time champion grabbed the yellow jersey Wednesday, beating his US Postal Service squad in stormy 61.5-mile-ended team time trial.

"It really was a special day," Armstrong said. "I was just smiling on the bike. It was like a dream."

The 32-year-old Texan showed no symptoms of his treatment during the 84-km (49-mile) ride from Cambrai to Arras.

"I'm sure, I know guys, you can do [illegible]," Armstrong's George Hincapie said. "He's just a ball of energy. It's almost like it's his first Tour de France."

In finishing one of many biggest rivals that control some rivals to climb, the Postal Service team averaged 53.1 kph (33.1 mph)—the third-fastest pace in team history.

Team coach Johan Bruyneel said his team must spend moments to plan to perfection. AP

Overall No. 1 Howard signs with Magic

NEW YORK—Dwight Howard, the overall No. 1 draft selection by the Orlando Magic, has signed with the NBA team.

Howard, an 18-year-old forward who played at Southwest Atlanta Christian Academy last season, was the first of eight high school players taken in the first 14 picks of last month's draft.

Andris Biedrins, a forward from Latvia who was the 11th pick in the first round, also signed Wednesday with Golden State, while Kevin Martin, the 38th pick, signed with Sacramento and David Harrison, the 39th and last pick of the first round, signed with Indiana.

The rookie scale under the NBA collective bargaining agreement calls for the No. 1 overall pick to earn a fo[illegible] three first-round rookies over the life of the contract, and about $5.5 million the season.

Howard won the 2004 Naismith Award, given to the nation's top high school player.

Rookies will play with Golden State's summer league team in Long Beach, California, next week. AP

BUSINESS

Julio Raul D. Marcelo
Assistant Editor Corrie S. Nakpil

Gov't to propose 2005 budget of P901B

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

$1 = ₱55.816 (As of 5 p.m. July 8, 2004)

¥1 = ₱0.5089 (As of 5 p.m. July 8, 2004)

GOLD: $399.5-400.6 per ounce (Hong Kong, July 8, 2004)

July 8, 2004 Country	Unit	Peso Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	55.8000	1.00000	55.8000
Japan	Yen	0.50140	0.00899	50.1400
United Kingdom	Pound	1.00000	1.79205	102.8000
Hong Kong	Dollar	7.15911	0.12833	7.1591
Switzerland	Franc	44.3000	0.79391	44.3000
Canada	Dollar	41.0000	0.73481	41.0000
Singapore	Dollar	33.0000	0.59141	33.0000
Australia	Dollar	41.0000	0.73481	41.0000
Bahrain	Dinar	148.0000	2.65239	148.0000
Saudi Arabia	Riyal	14.8000	0.26524	14.8000
Kuwait	Dinar	183.0000	3.27957	183.0000
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.00600	0.00011	0.0060
Thailand	Baht	0.01400	0.00249	0.1400
UAE	Dirham	15.2000	0.27237	15.2000
Euro	Euro	1.00000	1.79205	102.8000
Argentina	Peso	0.17400	0.00307	0.1740
Brazil	Real	0.19000	0.00341	0.1900
Denmark	Krone	0.13400	0.00240	13.7700
India	Rupee	0.01240	0.00222	1.2700
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.01000	0.00179	0.1000
Mexico	New Peso	0.01000	0.00179	0.1000
New Zealand	Dollar	0.03000	0.00538	30.1000
Norway	Krone	7.46275	0.13374	7.4627
Pakistan	Rupee	0.01000	0.00179	0.9900
South Africa	Rand	0.01810	0.00324	0.1800
Sri Lanka	Rupee	0.00000	0.00000	0.0000
Sweden	Krona	0.00000	0.00000	0.0000
Syria	Pound	0.00000	0.00000	0.0000
Taiwan	Dollar	0.01700	0.00305	1.6900
Vietnam	Dong	0.00000	0.00000	0.0000

STOCK MARKET

Shares close slightly down

CLOSES slipped in minor trade yesterday after the main index encountered stiff resistance at the 1,600 level, prompting profit taking in key blue chips like telecom heavyweight PLDT.

Analysts said the market was likely to remain subdued for a few days, but second quarter corporate earnings reports out later this month may trigger renewed buying.

The Philippine Stock Index closed 4.69 points or 0.29 percent higher at 1,595.74 points, its highest level since it ended at 1,599.47 points on Feb. 19.

The index had almost hit the 1,600 psychological barrier yesterday but investors apparently preferred to cash in their gains and adopt a wait-and-see attitude ahead of the first quarter earnings reports.

"The market was poised to hit the 1,600 resistance level but [short-changed] profiting down the market.

"The earnings reporting season would be a catalyst," Victor said.

Victor said news of oil rigs being sold foreign by gainers in this did not settle the market but said it was worrisome as it was a reminder that the Philippines, a net oil importer, is a target of terror groups.

Market turnover climbed to P484.18 million from Wednesday's P420.06 million. Losers outpaced gainers, 80 to 71, with 40 issues unchanged.

Dominant player from Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) lost P15 or 1.2 percent to P1,220, accounting for about 32 percent of the total turnover.

PLDT rival Globe Telecom was unchanged at P884. Globe said its net losses had ballooned over $6 million in the roll-out of its broadband internet service for residential and business customers.

Bank developer SM Prime Holdings Inc inched up 10 centavos or 1.69 percent to P6.30.

Power distributor Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) B fell P1 or 2.53 percent to P38. Its A shares slipped 25 centavos or 1.20 percent to P19.

Meralco said in a statement it would not pay interest on its P39.94-billion worth of refunds for customers, as requested by a consumer group, because the order issued this Supreme Court did not provide for interest.

The power firm said it could complete the refund by years of overbilling to 68 percent of notified customers by year-end. **Zacharo**

PFA posts P1B in net income

THE PHILIPPINE Ports Authority has reported asset income of more than P1 billion in the first five months, up 28 percent or P222 million from P782.86 million the previous year.

PPA general manager Alfonso Cusi said the five-month performance, which surpassed the P888-million target by 13 percent, was attributed to increased revenue and tighter expenditures.

The maritime agency is projecting a 64-percent growth in its net income this year to P1.28 billion versus P847.3 million in 2003. Based on the latest numbers, the PPA will likely exceed the target.

From January to May, the PPA garnered P3.23 billion or 3.24 percent higher than P2.14 billion a year ago. Expenses dropped by 17.3 percent to P1.73 billion during the same period from P1.84 billion in the five months of 2003.

The PPA is preparing to sell three of its 22 ports within the year. Among those lined up for privatization this year and next were the Port of Harbor, Batangas port, Cagayan de Oro port, Currimao port.

There are more than 600 ports in the country catering to around 50 million passengers and more than 100 million metric tons of cargo yearly. Nearly 300,000 vessels arrive at Philippine ports every year while more than 3.5 million TEU containers pass through these ports.

The PPA is tasked to operate government-owned ports, help regulate the maritime industry and set up more ports to improve the flow of goods and services.

ARTICLE also has been [illegible] with the new global standards on safety and security outlined by the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code, according to Cusi.

Cusi said PPA hopes to reduce its fees in the next three years and had no intention to do so in the near future. **Clarissa V. Batino**

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE NATIONAL government will propose to Congress a budget of P901 billion for next year, up by 4 percent from the P865 billion earmarked this year, Budget Undersecretary Laura Pascua said yesterday.

Of the amount, P270 billion will be used for debt servicing, which is automatically appropriated. This is 19 billion higher than this year's P251 billion.

A source from the Department of Finance said the government was targeting to raise P700 billion in revenue next year, including at least P50 billion to be generated through the implementation of fresh tax measures.

If the government would meet this revenue target, next year's budget shortfall would only be P123 billion or lower than the projected ceiling of P140.5 billion.

The government incurred a record high deficit of P218 billion in 2003. The gap dropped to P190-P200bn last year.

It is targeting to contain its budget deficit within the ceiling of P197.8 billion this year and P164.5 billion next year. It aims to attain a balanced budget by 2008.

The government is planning to raise additional revenue by introducing new tax measures. It had considered to tax "texting" or short messaging through cellular phones, which was estimated to result in about P6.07 billion in additional revenue yearly.

This option was, however, dropped due to strong public resistance.

Another plan is the imposition of excise taxes on "sin" products which is expected to generate as much as P14 billion in additional revenue.

In the meantime, a visiting International Monetary Fund team had recommended a more ambitious deficit reduction program to bolster the credibility of the government's fiscal strategy.

The Fund has been urging that fundamental revenue measures were needed to fund consolidation.

In particular, the IMF favored increases in the excise taxes on cigarettes and alcohol and in the value-added tax rate.

It had also advised the government to limit tax incentives and any proposals for tax amnesty.

Of the programmed budget this year of P874.1 billion, the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs are supposed to contribute P477 billion and P112 billion, respectively.

Gov't urged to reduce deficit to 2.5% of GDP

By Rommel M. Dominguez

MULTILATERAL lender International Monetary Fund wants Malacañang to adopt a program that will result in a greater reduction of the budget deficit.

A ranking government official involved in the just concluded consultations with an IMF mission said this was among the issues tackled during the talks.

The government is projecting a budget deficit equivalent to 4.2 percent of this year's gross domestic product. It aims to reduce it to 3.6 percent of GDP in 2005.

The IMF, however, thinks the projected reduction is too small and it wants the government to aim at a deficit-level equivalent to only 2.5 percent of GDP in 2005, the official said.

Last year's deficit reached P190 billion and the year's ceiling was set at P197.8 billion.

The source said the other concerns of the IMF relate to the Medium-Term Fiscal Framework included the proposal to adopt a cut system based on private companies' gross income to replace the current system based on net income.

The lender believes it will be easy to introduce a new tax system where there is a need to increase government revenues, the official said.

Another concern was the plan to impose an additional tax on petroleum products of 3% a liter, as proposed by the Department of Finance and endorsed by the Economic Monitoring Group.

He said officials of the IMF favored the plan although they thought this would be difficult to implement, given the high prices of oil.

The Fund, he added, also expressed concern over the possible impact on the economy of National Power Corp.'s application for a two-tube averaging P1.85 a kilowatt-hour.

According to the latest report on the country's observance of standards and codes, the IMF welcomed recent improvements in the government's procurement rules, cash management, accounting systems, internal audit, and revenue projections.

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter to our nation's life

Average retail prices of fuel products* (January 2002 to June 2004, peso per liter)

*Retail prices in Caltex, Petron and Shell stations in Metro Manila's four congressional districts

Soaring world market prices of crude oil and the depreciation of the peso pushed up the prices of unleaded gasoline to an average of P32.85 per liter as of June from P27.33 per liter in January. Diesel prices averaged at P19.62 per liter. It's more than the level at the start of the year.

Marvin D. Tiongco, PDI Research

RP eyes new IMF standby program

THE PHILIPPINES, which "graduated" from the International Monetary Fund country program in 2001 but remained under its supervision, is considering a fresh standby program as a [illegible] option.

But Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura told reporters that while the IMF's doors were always open, there was no need yet to get a new loan package at this point.

"The standby program is always an alternative. It is available if it becomes necessary," Buenaventura said.

The Philippines is currently under a Post-Program Monitoring (PPM) arrangement with the Fund.

The PPM provides for frequent consultations between the IMF and members whose arrangements have expired, but which continue to have outstanding credit with the Fund.

"It [new loan] may not be necessary at this point. There are always two ways of looking at it. They might say we are in a much more difficult situation than where we are now," Buenaventura said.

"But the more likely scenario is we are still over with the pro-

(For more stories see Page B2)

SMC breaks ground in Indonesia

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

FOOD and beverage giant San Miguel Corp. (SMC) yesterday ratcheted its Asian expansion program up a notch when it broke ground for a new beverage manufacturing facility in Indonesia.

The new multi-product brewing plant is set to be put up at the MM2100 Industrial City in Bekasi Province, West Java, some 25 kilometers from Jakarta.

SMC officials visited the site to lay markers prior to the start of construction.

A new company called PT San Miguel Indonesia Foods and Beverage will be created. It will manufacture and distribute ready-to-drink soft beverages.

PT San Miguel Indonesia will be 95-percent owned by SMC. The balance of 5 percent is going to be held by PT Delta Djakarta Tbk, SMC's brewery in Indonesia.

SMC further said in investment "presents a growth opportunity for (SMC) and its domestic business partners in Indonesia's huge beverage market, which has been growing at an average of 20% over the past five years."

Last year, the consumption of non-alcoholic beverages in Indonesia is pegged at 86 liters, which is comparable to Thailand's 44.2 liters and the Philippines' 70.2 liters.

This new business reflects San Miguel's full confidence in Indonesia as a fast growing economy.

"(That) manifests our continuing commitment to promote the best interests of consumers in this country," said Eduardo Cojuangco Jr., SMC chair.

San Miguel officials said that they have also completed its acquisition of the brewery assets of Thai Asian Beverage Ltd., which is also part of the company's aggressive regional expansion program.

The assets include a modern and fully-equipped brewery.

The acquisition would complement other San Miguel projects in Thailand.

As part of its expansion program, the firm said it plans to set up a beer and liquor unit in Malaysia.

SMC gained a foothold in Indonesia in 1978, after it received a license to brew San Miguel beer. It began brewery operations in 1990 when it bought into PT Delta Djakarta, one of Indonesia's largest breweries.

PT Delta Djakarta's Amber Tin and Amber Steel brands currently enjoy a significant market share in the Indonesian market.

SMC has set more ground breaking activities outside the near to Australia, Vietnam, China and Malaysia.

The firm has over 100 manufacturing facilities in the Philippines, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Vietnam and Australia. The company's products are also sold in over 40 countries throughout the world.

SMC also produces processed meats in Indonesia through PT Pantbeda Eskindo Indah, a joint venture with De Heus Group of Indonesia.

Its farmhouse and ham hotdogs and sausages, cold cuts, burgers and other processed meats are also rapidly gaining consumer acceptance and are major players in the country's fast growing processed meats industry.

The company also runs a pipeline plant in Indonesia through PT San Miguel Yamamura Packaging Indonesia, which produces plastic crates and pallets. With a report from AFP

25 MILLION FOR RELENDING

MB approves DBP euro loan from EU

By Darlene C. Cristobal

THE MONETARY Board has approved the plan of the Development Bank of the Philippines to take out a 25-million euro loan from the European Investment Bank, the financing arm of the European Union.

Armando Tetangco Jr., BSP Deputy Governor for bank supervision and examination, said the proceeds from the loan would be used to finance infrastructure projects.

These include agro-industrial ventures, commercial infrastructure and urban development projects, Tetangco said.

He said the DBP probably chose to borrow in Euros to diversify its loan portfolio.

The DBP said earlier that it was ready to extend more official development assistance (ODA) funds to support the country's infrastructure development.

In priority sectors include social infrastructure projects that cover health care, education and housing.

The state-run bank also focuses on the development of the toll-on, toll-off tourist system, bulk grains highway, logistics development projects and environmental management.

The bank reported a record high wholesale lending operations in 2003, with loan approvals totaling P103.33 billion or 70 percent higher than the previous year.

Bacnotan eyes investments in 3 sectors

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

HOLDING firm Bacnotan Consolidated Industries Inc. (BCI) is eyeing possible investments in the energy, low-cost housing and oil-related sectors.

Oscar Hilado, BCI chair and president, said it can invest in any of the holding firm's by investing in buying power plants and exploring other opportunities...whether for partnerships or acquisitions—in the education and low-cost housing sectors.

Hilado was quick to say that there are no acquisition targets at this time.

He said that there are already expansion projects in the pipeline, but he declined to identify them.

This comes after BCI, the flagship company of the Pharma Group, sold its 27.3-percent share in Union Galvasteel Holdings Corp. to Cemex Holdings Inc., a company 40 percent owned by Solidcrete B.V.

Asia Cement Corp., a 55-percent subsidiary of BCI, also approved the sale of its 29.69 percent in Union Galvasteel to Cemex.

The total transaction, valued at $23.6 million, consisted of $19 million for the direct holdings of BCI, and $3.125 million by Asia' shareholdings.

Officials expect to close the deal by Aug. 11. The selling price is equivalent to P33.89 for each BCHC share based on the current dollar-exchange rate.

Sta. Lucia agrees to partly settle Zipporah debts

PROPERTY developer Sta. Lucia Realty and Development Inc. has agreed to partially settle the obligations of its subsidiary, Zipporah Realty Holdings Inc., through a property swap and conversion of debt into stocks.

In a disclosure, Zipporah said Sta. Lucia, which is a major stockholder of the company, took an account of Zipporah's obligations, which reached a total of P61.67 million.

It was not indicated whether Zipporah's obligations were with Sta. Lucia or another bank. Officials were unavailable for comment at press time.

Sta. Lucia however has agreed to partially settle the obligations of Zipporah's behalf.

In 1996, Zipporah inked a joint venture with Sta. Lucia to build a 46-story building in Ayala Avenue. The total estimated saleable area is approximately 38,369 square meters, with Zipporah sharing in 46 percent of net saleable area.

Another subsidiary Hedex Inc. launched its first real estate project, the Montessa Village in Imus, Pandacan, in January 1996. The project, which consisted of two four-story buildings, was created in order to young urban professionals and the growing demands of the middle income market for condominium projects.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

DISCLOSURES

MEGALAND Prime Inc. moved its annual stockholders' meeting to Sept. 7 to give the company enough time to prepare its financial reports.

* * *

SOUTHEAST Asia Cement Holdings Inc. denied having any information to explain the 10-percent increase in its share price that rose from P0.41 to P0.50 each.

* * *

EAST Asia Power Resources Corp. disclosed that it failed to hold its regular stockholders' meeting last month because no quorum could be attained. The board of directors will set a new date for the meeting.

* * *

ALDEN J. Yan was elected independent director of **Union Banking Corp.** The bank also declared a cash dividend of P0.040 per share and a 5% percent stock dividend in favor of stockholders of record as of July 23. Payment and issuance date of said dividends will be on Aug. 17. Also, it will make UBC Properties and Computer Center Inc. its wholly owned subsidiary after accepting offers by certain stockholders to sell and to the bank. The shares of the latter subsidiaries, UBC Insurance Brokers Inc. will be changed to Chinabank Insurance Brokers Inc.

* * *

ELECTED officers of **Lepanto and Rosario Marie Corp.** were Roberto Ongpin, chair and president; Geoffrey Ignatius, treasurer; vice president and compliance officer and Cristina Fabros, corporate secretary.

* * *

BACNOTAN Consolidate Industries Inc. denied having any information, other than its reported sale of Union Cement Holdings Corp. shares to Cemex Holdings Inc., to explain the increase in its share price that rose from P.98 to P1.02 each. Compiled by Marissa G. Lotus; PDI Research

White trash gets monkey treatment

A RETIRED Make who had one too many drink aboard a recent Hong Kong-Manila flight and started walking the cover "mean keys" was served his stolen desserts by a Filipino bank president and OG-based investment executive.

According to the grapevine, the Brit had been drowning gloomy sorrows in gin and tonic at the Philippine Airlines Mabuhay Lounge in the colony's Chep Lap Kok airport while waiting for the 6 p.m. Juan 26 flight.

Because typhoon "Ignie" was then clubbing its way over south-

ern Philippines, the 6 p.m. flight had to be cancelled, leaving the balky Brit and his Filipina companion no choice but to wait for the last 10G flight, when the stormy weather had by then subsequently subsided.

The bank president, who was with his wife, and Amador were stuck in the same lounge, and although he had to wait for the 8 p.m. flight 211, which finally departed Hon takeoff at 9:30 p.m.

Even before takeoff, the inebriated Brit had already been bawling the corruption and inefficiency of the Filipinos, lecturing to his cape Filipino audience of one, much to the annoyance of the lawyer and the banker.

What finally got the two Filipinos to boiling point was that, as the fully-packed plane prepared for landing at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, the Brit, resenting a final "one for the road," dumped his hands and called the hostess ashtray over. "Hey, senorita, monkeys, I want another one!"

Hearing this, a chili-red Amador boiled up, rushed in front of the guests, gave him a backhanded slap in the face, and shouted, "Don't you ever call Filipinos monkeys again or I will get you."

The Brit tried to get up, but the bank president, instead right behind him, pushed the foreigner down.

Cooler heads intervened before a full-blown racial riot could erupt.

Amador had to restrain to the lawyers inside and advised the cabin crew to restrain just security to move the drunken guest, who wisely stayed glued to his seat and kept his mouth shut after the scuffle.

No bank president, incidentally, is an ex-PCBanker crushed for turning sexual-assaulting comedian/hosts.

SEC declined to comment on the incident.

Vivian and Robert

SHORT of exchanging lines, feuding couplebuster Vivian Velez and Robert Clyde E. were seen amid heated greeting each other besides meeting at the ICC in The Fair, before proceeding to have breakfast at separ-

CONTINUED

RP eyes . . .

From page B1

great others they will provide to the seal of good housekeeping," he said.

The IMF was scheduled to end in November last year but the IMF panel recommended an other extension, although the Philippines' outstanding debt to the Fund had now fallen below the country's quota limit on a discretionary.

Although the country is now a net creditor, the IMF chief believes the IMF remains crucial to curbs the nonchalance of the government's economic program.

Only late last year, the government was keen on getting free the IMF, which replaced an earlier precautionary arrangement with the IMF that was installed after the country's "positive fund" from the Eurodollar bond facility.

The Philippines has had 20 different financing programs with the Fund, whose lending package was used to stabilize the country's balance of payment position.

A meeting IMF women and the Philippine panel yesterday wrapped up discussions on the country's economic program.

During its latest country report, the IMF warned of the Philippines' vulnerability to large fiscal deficits, heavy debt burden, unstable investment climate and slow reforms in the power and banking sectors.

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Sky, Home Cable to merge this year, says PLDT exec

By Cinthya G. Rodeo

DEBTTORS have tapped foreign bank HSBC as the escrow agent for a $38-million infusion of MVS-GHI Broadcasting Corp. into the soon-to-be-merged Philippine Home Cable holdings of PLDT and the Lopez-owned Sky Vision Corp. and General CATV.

Raj Espinosa, Home Cable president, said that the consolidation of the three entities would be completed this year.

"There are still a lot to be done, but with the debt restructuring in place, we should be able to push through with the consolidation this year," said Espinosa, also a ranking official of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

Creditors of the three cable firms have agreed to place the funds in escrow to ensure that it would be readily available for the investment-starved company around the cable operations.

"It merger will reduce operating expenses, make operations more efficient, and upgrade facilities to address piracy which is the biggest headache of the cable industry," said Gondelon.

At least half of those using SkyCable and Home Cable are believed to be illegally connected.

The $38 million would be used for set-up boxes that would prevent piracy, to hire programmers and to retire redundant staff, according to a source.

"The money would be in escrow in HSBC, but the investment would come in tranches," according to another banker. "The creditors just like an assurance that when the money is needed, it is readily available."

In the event that the $38 million would be more than what the cable firms would need to improve operations, creditors would like the remaining amount to be used to service the outstanding obligations.

Business creditors finally agreed on July 1 to restructure the combined P1.32-billion debt of the three cable firms. The 14 lenders gave the three cable firms some years to settle their obligations.

Home Cable has an outstanding debt of P1.36 billion, Control CATV has P1.36 billion, and Sky Vision has P1.28 billion.

The three cable firms would eventually be merged into a single entity to be called Beyond Cable Holdings Inc.

The company is to be run Globe-owned by the Lopez group, while PLDT would be left with the remaining third.

"There's a compelling reason to merge," the banker said. "Right now, they are already operationally merged, but the legal consolidation will happen after an SEC approval."

Apart from paving the way for the complete consolidation of the cable firms, the pact with creditors is also seen to allow the group to pursue its expansion plans and facilitate the entry of a new investor.

Juan Chuidian, SkyCable vice president for programming, said that by the end of the year, Sky and Home Cable would be offering different sets, which would cost between P695 and P750.

The listing scheme would suit different subscribers' budgets and preference. The scheme, according to officials, would take address cable television piracy.

SkyCable and Home Cable already account for at least 70 percent of the total cable TV subscribers in Metro Manila.

"We're working on the full remodeling," Chuidian said. "It's just a matter of time."

Asian Internet firm launches new service

INGINE Internet, Asia's largest voice-...independent voice communications provider, has come up with an Internet service that allows travelers to stay connected online with their home or office every time they go on business trips.

Pacific Bozen allows businessmen to access the Internet wherever their business take them—at 11,000 locations in more than 350 countries.

Pacific Bozen is now an option, easier than a hotel's business center or an Internet cafe. It's a business class service to the Internet where you only get charged for your actual usage when you travel, no sign-up fees, no activation fees and no monthly maintenance charges.

So before going to a business trip, it's advisable to plan ahead and call Pacific Internet's customer support hotline at +63 (2) 551 ... or visit http://corporate.pacific.net.ph or email inquiries to marketing.asia@pacific.net.ph.

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Employment: Key to fighting poverty

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

"I HAVE been around more than six and four jobs, perhaps, even 10 million jobs."

It is fitting that in her inaugural speech, President Macapagal-Arroyo made this her first point in her 10-point anti-poverty program for the next six years.

With jobs, people not only get to fight poverty, they also get to gain a measure of dignity.

COMMENTARY

Jobs

Let us look at the employment numbers from 1990 to 1999. This was when Ordoñez and, in the U Wolor La Nina phenomena and the unstable political environment caused an unusual employment slump.

The average annual number of jobs created during those 10 years was 670,000. Of these jobs, 570,000, or 20 percent, were in agriculture.

For 2000 to 2003, the table below shows the number of new jobs created:

NEW JOBS CREATED

	Total	2000	2001	2002	2003
Total new jobs created	1,400	1,700	800	300	
Agriculture jobs	800	700	300	100	
% of Agriculture jobs	100%	41%	37%	33%	

From 2001 to 2002, under President Arroyo's watch, the average annual total number of new jobs was 1.3 million. This is better than the 670,000 annual new jobs during the 1990s. Of course, we realize that the 2001 increase of 1.7 million jobs was partly because of the 300,000 job increase in 2000.

For agriculture, the average annual number of new jobs from 2000 to 2003 was 230,000. This is also far better than the 570,000 new agriculture jobs recorded in the 1990s.

For the job take-off year of 2001, agriculture grew a 40-percent share of the total new jobs. For the balance of 2000 to 2003, agriculture got in total 25 percent share, similar to its 20 percent in the '90s.

More jobs, more growth

When there are more jobs, there is generally more growth. The use of new technology can mean more growth but less jobs. But both technology use and job creation should be used to find our growth.

In the agriculture area, the absence of new technology will mean the loss of millions of jobs from imported products under the liberalized trade regime.

Below is our agricultural growth over the last four decades:

AGRICULTURAL GROWTH

	60-70	70-80	80-90	90-2000	00-04
Agriculture	4.3%	3.4%	2.1%	2.1%	3.0%

We note that the 3.1 percent average agricultural growth rate of the '60s and '70s far exceeded the 2.1 percent growth of the '80s and '90s.

From 2004 to 2010, we wanted to present Undersecretary Leonardo Montemayor, the growth almost doubled at 4.6 percent in 2001 and 3.5 percent in 2002. Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo estimated this growth at 3.0 percent in 2003. Our jobs created, they grew by 700,000 to 1000, 200,000 in 2002 and 100,000 in 2003. Agricultural growth was highest in 2001, when job creation was also at its peak.

Analysis

We have gained momentum during the last three years with a 3.0 percent agricultural growth rate. But if we are to achieve Mr Arroyo's job creation target, we should aim for at least the 3.9 percent growth achieved in the '70s.

We can also the 700,000 new agricultural jobs jump-started the agricultural growth in 2001. We now should give priority attention to job creation in the agriculture sector.

In 2003, 40 percent of the new jobs were in agriculture. A percentage much higher than this, based on the Arroyo's plan to create 4 million to 9 million new jobs, should be retained if we want to sustain the growth momentum in agriculture.

Without this, the sector will continue to be stricken with poverty.

Three areas

Two days ago on July 6, key leaders of the Arroyo administration met again to discuss the President's 10-point agenda. While they acknowledged the improvements done by the government in agriculture, they cited three areas that needed significant change if they are to survive the globalization regime.

The first is the need for a comprehensive agriculture master plan, with supporting commodity sub-sector plans.

Antonio Tinio Ching, a convener of the Kilusang Mangingisda, cited the case of municipal fisheries.

"Why is there a master plan for shipping while there is nothing for municipal fisheries?" Tinio Ching asked. "This affects the vast majority of our poor fisherfolk. And why was the funding for commodities as critical as rice underfunded?"

The second is the need for a budget to support the agricultural plan.

Ramon Segundo-Ayco, executive director of the Philippine Peasant Institute, underlined why the Department of Agriculture allotted a budget of only P13 billion for this year, "when the Agricultural Fisheries Modernization Act (AMA) stipulates that agriculture should get P72.6 billion?"

"We believe the agricultural growth plan originally envisioned by AFMA should be pursued, and supported by the corresponding budget," Segundo-Ayco said.

The third is the need for temporary tariff protection, while the necessary support services (e.g. infrastructure, technology transfer, etc.) promised by government are put in motion.

According to Alfredo Mangahas, chair of the Bengzet Vegetable Farmers and Marketers Cooperative, the tariffs for some of our vegetables are pegged at 7 percent.

"This is well below the bound rate of 40 percent allowed in the World Trade Organization (WTO) agreement, Mangahas said. "We should not allow any further tariff decreases until the support circumstances provided for should even exaggerate for some tariff increases."

Conclusion

These are but some of the concerns government must address so that farmers and fisherfolk can work with government in achieving President Arroyo's 10-point program.

This is especially true in her first point of creating jobs. Many of the jobs will come from the agriculture sector, which is really the key to fighting poverty in the Philippines.

(The author is chair of Agrinvestiv, a private sector initiative; former undersecretary of agriculture and trade and industry, and former chair and National secretary for Agricultural Cooperatives and Projects. For inquiries or suggestions, e-mail: angelo@info@yahoo.com or ramplus@pldtdsl.net.)

Cocktales

Turn to page B4

ero tables. Vivian with her daughter, Robert with his friends.

The two nearly had a close and more intimate encounter later Tuesday night when the first class section of the Philippine Airlines flight to San Francisco when, for reasons still mugging, Captain decided to postpone his trip for the next night after getting a sip that Vivian was also booked in the same flight.

Whether the rare co-incidences of the Philippine Stock Exchange crossed paths and left their hearts in the City by the Bay is now the subject of much speculative buzz among fellow brokers.

Halfway there

LEBOH BI St. is close to acquiring half of the an Banking Corp., assuming that the small magnate is not the beneficial buyer of the controlled trading line previously held by the Taiwanese bank KBC.

The rapper said his former Party disclosed that they acquired last month a few more shares from the market to increase their and was either by companies' combined beneficial shareholdings of Chinabank to 49.495 percent, a shade higher than the previous mandated 40.488 percent.

Incidentally, the combined by this does not include whatever portion the rapper has obtained from friendly brokers and institutional investors.

The contested KBC bloc, on the other hand, represents a little over 8 percent of Chinabank's shares. The shares had been acquired by two little known offshore companies through a cross sale at the Philippine Stock Exchange facilitated by broker Didio Soliven, a known by-stic.

With rapper Alfonso Yuchengco selling his stake to the Sys, the AP deal can now proceed at the Makati Regional Trial Court has been put in the judicial freezer. Mr. 45 is being represented in that case by Victor Lazatin of Sison, ICBC, by former Solicitor General Estelito Mendoza.

Heard through the grapevine

SEC Chair Lilia Bautista met with the leaders of the pro-used industry Wednesday to discuss ways to prevent epidemic risk. She could arise from the P71 billion trust fund deficiency of Philippine Associated Fish.

SEC-designated *CAP* oversight chair Danilo Concepcion, meanwhile, promised to brief the press and the public on the over-CAP issue soon once he is ready.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

LIFESTYLE

Great new edible scents

MAKEOVER 911

Kinney Salas

I LOVE several fruits for scents but the rainy season. Whenever I spray [unspecified] scent, it sets the right mood for me as well as those around me. And, yes, the scents are suitable for day and night.

Grapeseed

When it was discovered that grape seed is a powerful antioxidant, beauty products containing it have been sprouting like wild weeds.

Cosmetic companies have also discovered that grape seed smells wonderful, hence the birth of a product like Caudalie's Fleur de Vigne fragrances.

The smells just like a vineyard during the high season: harvest of fresh green grapes in France or California's Napa Valley. Or, it's not **the** smell**s** to **warm** purple grape **juice** smell we grew up with. It is a perfect balance of refreshing with a hint of citrus and sweet. If you have tried the fresh grape juice in Glin, you would know what I'm talking about.

Fleur de Vigne's very light fresh scent doesn't last very long, as I have to settle The Body Shop's Grapeseed line, which consists of body scrub, **shower gel, body butter and spray oil.**

The line's scents are almost identical to Caudalie. I apply the spray oil and put the Fleur de Vigne over it and, what do you know, the scent lasts for a good four hours.

The good news is that many Body Shop followers have not yet discovered grape seed, so it's not about to become a passport scent for now.

Then there's Lancôme's Nuvelle Glossy Lip Flavour SPF 8, which plumps up the driest lips and tastes and smells like fresh green grapes.

CAUDALIE Fleur de Vigne

Almond

For almond-based fragrances, one of the best bets is L'Occitane's Amande Blossom dew. Scores' Bitter Almond shower body oil spray is more reasonably priced than L'Occitane, and the shower gel does not feel as slick as the creamy shower oil. But it's great to sink them brands, since they don't clash and they don't have that cloying synthetic smell.

More sophisticated almond-based scents for evenings include Burberry Brit, which lasts all night long and smells like sugary almonds, vanilla bean, amber and pears. There's also Davidoff's Zino de Pete. It smells like sugar-coated almond cookies in an aftershave-ish pairing.

Citrus

Calvin Klein has come up with another limited edition scent in CK One Summer. The citrusy fragrance comes in a graduated bottle in rich lime and lemon-yellow colors.

It's a perfect his and hers scent for couples since there are no blatant masculine or feminine undertones. Truly unisex, and all fresh and clean.

I've also noticed that it blends very well with perspiration, so it's ideal for sports and workout freaks. CK One Summer is not overpowering, but that doesn't mean it's any less enticing with its heady mixture of citrus extracts, kiwi, star fruit and vetiver.

Spa in a bottle

On the other hand, marine scents such as Clarins Eau Tranquility, Lacoste Eau Aquamarine and Cool Water Woman Wassh Fragrance (limited edition) reawakens the smell of perspiration, heightens concentration and helps one relax.

Exercise' marine-scented shower gel and body lotion makes for a long-lasting blend, which blends wonderfully with other products such as Crabtree's green tea soap, Palmolive green tea body powder, shower gel and shampoo.

Clarins Orange is similar to Clinique Happy, and Nelson Mini is for those who like woodsy scents—a very fresh manly scent, in my opinion.

Caudalie, L'Occitane, Exercise **and** *Clarins are available at* **Rustan's**, Lacoste, Clinique and Clarins are available at Rustan's department store.

E-mail the author at kinneysalas@yahoo.com

CLARINS Eau Tranquility

JOEY Salcedo

PATRICK Ramos-Diaz

MALAYSIA

INDONESIA

RAMOS-DIAZ

SAMSON

Crystallizing design ideas

Designers from the region show why it pays to use Swarovski in fashion

Text by Alex T. Vergara
Photos by Chito Nieva

RAMOS-DIAZ

RAMOS-DIAZ

JOSE Llorca

ASK any Divisoria vendor what kind of crystal beads are available in the market and you'll learn of two: the real McCoy made by Austrian-based Swarovski and the cheaper and less handsome Bangkok version.

How cheap a cheap Bangkok cousin are said to sell at P100 per string of 10, while Swarovski costs as much as P20-P60 per piece, depending on the size. But if the recent fashion show of the NBC Tent is any indication, the advantages of using Swarovski over those made by lesser-known competitors are perhaps legion.

"The difference is like night and day," said Singapore-based PJ Ulin, division manager of Swarovski's crystal components business in Southeast Asia. "For one, Swarovskito is completely in more than 100 years old."

Aside from being backed by a tradition of quality and consistency, Swarovski's has a wide range of components—four million items in the fashion category alone. Among the newest colors featured in the show were Pacific Opal and Violet Opal.

Under first-time designer Mother Moyles, the show gave fashionistas an idea of how Swarovski finds's top designers—including PE spinner Anjo Lorenz, Patrice Ramos-Diaz and Joey Salcedo—used Swarovski crystals in various cuts, colors and sizes to embellish their clothes. Each designer showed five to seven pieces following a particular theme.

"They (Swarovski crystals) have a different kind of sparkle," said Llorca, who did a black-and-white, Audrey Hepburn-inspired collection along the "Cool Sophisticates" theme.

"They're really distinct compared to those made in Thailand and Czechoslovakia."

Different show

The fast-paced show was also different in many ways. For one, the people behind it did away with an elevated catwalk. They also opted for the less strategic lighting to better show off a sparkle here and there. There were, here of the audience were seated on elevated bleachers, they looked down on the models and the Swarovski-beaded clothes.

The region-wide series kicked off in Indonesia some months back before it came to the Philippines. The press will again be shown in Malaysia before the series takes a turn to Singapore, in time for the city state's fashion week.

Oddly enough, organizers skipped Thailand. Ups cited "technical reasons" for the oversight.

The three Filipino designers did enjoy tremendous home-court advantage, but based on the clothes they showed the three deserved the applause they got. The crowd's energy level occasionally hit the roof as the word Philippines was flashed on the giant video screen. Even the band, whose live tunes were blended with canned music, played lively.

Indeed, it was a fitting finale and made-around show for an already impressive audition that politely set through the collections of unknown regional designers.

Working wonders

Samson's deconstructed and youngish pieces inspired by "Tribal Image" and "Land of Illusion" opened the Philippine segment amid lively cheers. The designer is the first to admit that he's no big Swarovski user. He knows, however, that a mere hint of crystals can work wonders on a great variety of clothes.

"You don't have to use a lot of Swarovski [beads] for them to work," he said. "Because they're so sparkly, a little goes a long way."

His models for one of embellishment, consisting mostly of silver crystals, for "feminizing" his collection consisting of structured and layered separates, sculpted corsets paired with Lycra dresses and trendy club wear.

Llorca (best classic specify Swarovski, Llorca said Ramos-Diaz have also limited to use to exciting gowns.

After being given a carte blanche to lay their hands on all available materials, however, Ramos-Diaz went all out by creating her own fabrics and basing them with various crystals that caught her fancy. Her show-stopping shades of green and earth is teeming with "flames," her assigned theme.

Ramos-Diaz, for instance, did a cropped jacket made of strings on a minimalistic, leather dress worn by the press to get finished, but red bow appeared later to incorporate the crystals with the strings simultaneously. Another piece consisted of a layered dress made of tulle that she had embroidered and mixed with organza and iron on and designing Swarovski beads.

Her genius lies in her ability to combine frills with shiny crystals without her clothes degenerating into a tangled heap. Despite all those details, the collection's overall look is soft, feminine and earthy.

"It wasn't as simple as creating a dress and embellishing it," Ramos-Diaz said. "The thought of representing the Philippines in other countries in a way also presented me to come up with something different."

Since his expertise is in tailoring, Llorca kept his silhouettes clean and close to the body. His clothes, however, were anything but boring. A touch of drama, like exaggerated and oversized sleeves, art deco-like crystal patterns on a little black dress and sheer uneven skirts, kept eyes glued to his clothes.

Designers from various countries in the region were tapped not only to showcase creative uses of Swarovski but also captured design aesthetics, Llin said.

"Clothes are an extension of people's respective cultures and ways of life," said Llin. And these considerations are best expressed using expensive if pricey components, from the bikinis down to the shiny crystal accents.

LLORCA

SINGAPORE

SAMSON

SINGAPORE

LLORCA

THE EVENING'S foursome: Karen Pascual, Paola Nixon, JR Isaac and designer Rhett Eala

PHILIPPINE Tatler's Aileen Sin-Diaga, renowned entertainer Jojo Diaz-Lerma, Lizzy Torres-Gomez and Richard Gomez. Hey, I got a shirt just like this. Cool, huh!

THE SHAKERS. Ramon Bautista, Jack Chahine, Tim Yap and Miguel Puyat

Warm welcome for Thai brand

GREYHOUND made an evening entrance to Cuneo Mantile, pulutgan. At its grand launching in the tranquil Ayo garden in Greenhills it, drinks Cosmo, the guests arrived to marvel at the catwalk done to the steel grand, and pink tassels hanging on tree branches and wearing cute tops.

The affair was another boost for leather in the crop of fashion materials and by fifteen luxe-wear then Best Chan Greyhound is a popular fashion label from Thailand for stylish men and women.

The collection included super-cool casuals, semi formals and eye-catching party wear. It had footwear, jacket, cosmetics such as bags, wallets, shades, belts, and key rings.

Directed by hotel founder, the bride fashion show featured the label's Greyhound Original and Playground. It reminded us of how and showed models in their "dramatic" state. It highlighted different design techniques, such as setting tassels, draping, pastel, work, silkscreen and dyeing.

The more sophisticated greyhound inspired is for young professionals while Play-ground caters to younger market, pulutgan.

A well-formed guest that night was all flushed from too much champagne. My sister doesn't get to pink her husband's clothes, she told me.

"She doesn't pick them?" I asked.

"Oh no, she picks his panties," she said, laughing.

A popular socialite told me she had absolutely nothing to serve... ashes, in fact, she had four closets filled clothes.

In the launching was commercial socialite Natchaya Sirajhusmant of the Thai ordinary clothes was with her son, Dagupan's CEO and creative director Dhanin Kitkarnjanakul of Greyhound Thailand, merchandising and advertising manager Nathida Bantawaej, women's biz head Jiraporn Boisrot Bhakdibhat, the Metropolitan Museum's Ina Manalo, our pulutgan queens JR Isaac, Steven Pascual, his Argentite Cadenas, Ann Louise Pogoy, tall singers Nina Cruz and Paul Arnaldi with Charlie De Alwis, Bethenny, and Marianne Bautista of Spin Local, plus many others, pulutgan.

The fun happening ended with endless champagne and yummy Thai cocktails. The unique preview pictures were by the models were provided by Wilma Galvez.

Edgar Allan fantasy gowns

A sprawling tantalized garden in Dasmariñas Village became the setting of the new unique fashion shows by renowned designer Edgar Allan. The show was beautifully conceptualized by the New York-educated business partner, Rene Tongco, to boot.

Unique, in the sense that...aside from the series of bike models who showed off Edgar's awesome collection of skin-baring evening gowns, the fashion remained of real life dimensions and looks resembling Edgar Allan's creations.

The pretty debutantes included Anna Espino, in an aqua headliest number, Claire Almodovar of the noted Galeottis, Lagrosa, cheerful Bernardino, in a fiery red outfit, statuesque Hazel Sloane, and effervescent Kathleen Wise, whose parents, Dr. Shearer and Arline Tokes, owners of one of Cavite's largest private hospitals, watched approvingly as their daughter strutted down the ramp.

Not to be outdone were Edgar's brides, who looked not a pound heavier. Chics when they strolled down the aisle during their wedding day.

Datelel Mirta Gatacho, of the accounting firm SGV, was elegantly simple in a bateau neck bodice. Ruffeens inspired number.

The super chic Riana Mendoza Portmann in white, seemingly new had a headcover baby boy) was dramatic in her backless gown, bringing a smile to her hunky husband, John Arnold.

Allen Fung of Allanah's Catering (in nearby Forest Avenue, QC) arranged pastel-covered round tables on both sides of the catwalk on Edgar's long driveway. The ambience was like a hot summer Mediterranean evening, with summer flowers on the tables and throughout the garden.

Approaching the light pasta dinner were Mayaway Bernabe Fluorsus, owned Cubbard, Vi-Flor Bautista, hotelier/artist Nonie Bolaris, jet dealer Tess Chanco, and Baby Mendoza, wife of the late architect Felipe Mendoza.

On a nearby table were the artist/hostess Isabelyn Dr. Debag Reyes, Delia Chuming Mangun (Rene's mom), and Boots Bryles Thorpe.

Architect Allen Benito took time out from managing the family's Tri Valley hardware stores to watch his pediatrician wife, Maryjoe, sashay down the ramp.

Models Poppie Arriolds and her good looking husband, Arthur, were super excited seeing their daughter, Stephanie, do her thing in the flower girl.

At a wedding ceremony, I sense the father of the bride looking sad. "Why does he look so sad?" I asked a fellow guest. "The bride's must be his favorite daughter."

The fellow makes a lot of sense, di ba?

Back to Edgar Allan's wedding: a five-tiered fondant wedding cake adorned with pastel flowers was created by Make Gregorio of Cake Concepts. The invitations by Debbie Blanco of Choice Crafts featured a fairy background of pastel summer blooms.

"Cake Concepts and Choice Crafts are part of the special occasion services at Edgar's Boutique in Dasmariñas," explained Rene Tongco.

GREYHOUND Thailand's Nathida Bantawaej and Pichnee Bhakdibhat with Jojo Lizarraga and Ariel Lozada

CLOSE PALS. Angelette Cuneo, Leah Payne and Aimee Nagual

THE YUHINGCO clan: Joey and Gina, Adriana, Marsha and Anthony Yuhingco

BRILLIANT Basot, fiancée Ben Chan

FASHION WAT CHERS. ABS-CBN TV anchor Jovie Elmer Livingstone and Rhodora Cruzcosa at Studio 23

GREYHOUND clan down are architect Alan Benito, John and Jessica Arriolds and Dr. Jude Tongco

GUEST model Felicia Rodriguez shines off a cool apricot jukara pants ensemble.

OPENING number of pino hosts top and floral skirt dresses much applause.

ONE of Edgar Allan's signature understated and dramatic wedding gowns

THE EVENT'S cameras: Aileen Pamaj of Allanah's, with caterer of the hour Edgar Allan and guest Sylvia Lanting

DR. Shearer D'Isa with one of the hosts, Rene Tongco, a New York-trained cardiologist and Edgar Allan's business partner; (center) Raul Agustin and Arline Tokes

JOHN Derek Pamplona and his wife, real bride model Riana Mendoza

DR. Ricky Tongco, Felicia Rodriguez and Haydee Pryor Arriolds

Graduate must be clear about his expectations, preferences

Contributor

FOR THE PAST two weeks, this column has been about resumes and resumés so a letter writer's lament that s/he was having a hard time landing a job as an environmental science (ES) graduate. The letter appeared in the PCIJ-SUBIC column of The Daily Tribune.

We found that a graduate's job-hunting "blues" is a matter of great concern, mandating the different environmental problems confronting our country today. So we asked professionals in the environment and friends of our readers and others to react to that graduate's experience.

SEEING GREEN

Boots Gatchalé Negrete

Master of expectation

This week, we excerpt from the reply of Jo Cinema D'Cuaing, executive director, Environmental Studies Institute of Mindoro College, Bar writers.

"Is the letter writer's experience common? I asked the department heads of our fifi Environmental Planning Management programs as well as a professor of the EP Los Baños School of Environmental Science and Management about the misery and it seems there is no big employment problem.

"It is possible, however, that the writer's problem is a matter of expectation or preference. The environmental field is multidisciplinary. Graduates can be absorbed in a wide range of jobs. Has a BS Environmental Science course emphasis hard sciences based work.

"Either/and/or, this job outlook is as dim as that of other science graduates—chemistry, biology, physics, etc. These areas need a robust industrial economy and a government with a vigorous research program, which this country does not have. This is why so many schools' enrollment departments have folded up, and biology (to which I belong) graduates are underemployed or unemployed.

"The government, however, is now paying greater attention to industrial emissions. The ES graduate who has expertise in the intricacies of the biological and physical processes should have an edge over those limited to just one scientific discipline. Besides, environmental practice is only one approach to the environmental field. There are others, like programs on Environmental Planning and/or Management, Environmental Education, and Environmental Education.

"The environmental area is relatively young. Institutions offering degree programs have designed their own curricula based on how they view the field and their own expertise. There is as yet no standard curricula. This means that the market may also be confused as to what the graduates have to offer.

"We do know of ES graduates who have made a difference in their professions. LAWYERS, for one, have been championing environmental law implementation, international associations of scientists and members have formulated codes of practice which reflect environmental concern. But in the end, we have to ask: have these professionals significantly the environmental programs of our universities?"

Culture and aesthetics

Dr. Norma Ural F Reyes, chair of fifth ans College's Humanities Department, asks the question, "Of enough environmental science is not my direct training and profession, may I share some thoughts on the issue I brought about by the ES graduate's letter to Ms Negrete. The true general types of environmental problems confronting our country today are not merely technical—the ecological problems are also cultural... both (ability) large possession for those who would pursue, or are already in, the profession. I notice that much of environmental studies is focused on science or science-technology and the relevant or human needs aspects like the roles of design and the visual arts in environmentalism.

"We complain about the 'uglification' of the environment because our trees are vanished, (and)... or because our monuments and parks are not preserved, (and are) even vandalized. We envy the strategic landscapes that we see in our travels. What lessons can we get from these? A high sense of aesthetics—the arts, history, language and other areas in the cultural spectrum—is embedded in... (the) school curricula and in an enlightened political governance where economics is not only for the multinationals but much more for the and—the whole being.

"Are urbanization or booming talent history and the arts to underemphasized and underutilized. The students who entertainers aesthetic feeling would care about trees, water, air and (talk) about great trees, (and) the value of tree farming, the such as forest respect for life and creative as symbols. The arts is a valuable instrument in beautifying the environment.

"As Mr Pangan wrote... alternatives... should be explored. One's talents in the arts like design, photography, advertising (as layout), carving, landscaping and gardening, conservation (of historic interiors, for example) and the other fields on forms ... can contribute to a mutually beneficial landscape. The environment is, after all, our (personal) visual and multisensory medium of communication that can enhance beauty, cleanliness and decent economics is."

E-mail the author at denisegyde@yahoo.com

BALLET Manila ballerinas in the Carnegie Music Hall dressing room

THE AUTOCAMP Sunday Flamingo opens with around 60 stalls selling organic produce, meat, poultry, fish, seafood, flowers, plants, fruits, dry goods, export overstock and agricultural products and specialties from different regions. Located at 190 Ortigas Ave., a 6-min drive to the new Medical City, the bazaar operates from 5 a.m. 2 p.m. every Sunday. Call 721 1949 or 911 7217 to 6.

Fund-raising ballet concert features all-Pinoy repertoire

BALLET Manila marks its 2004 UP Town Hall Theatre repertoire in a fund-raising concert today, 5 p.m., at the Star Theater, Star City, Roxas Boulevard, Manila. Included are Ondine Sabio's "Irony," Agnes Locsin's "Agit" (with Gelo Pontejos), Tony Fabella's "Collapsing Principia," Jojo Lastimo's "Don't Blink," and the popular dance montage "Mga Awit at Sayaw," performed to a medley of OPM classics. Tickets are at P2000 each. (Call is ranging the special account to raise funds for its move into modern Northpoint in August. Call 5219302/ 4043606, or 0919 MA

CONTINUED ON 11

LIFESTYLE

Industrial management

TOWELS rest on metal racks in bare-wire fawcett classics.

Faced with a limited budget but brimming with imagination, architect Michelle Diz on-Legarda creates a home she loves

Text and photos by Joanne Zapanta-Andrada
Contributor

THE GREAT thing about the industrial, modern look is that you can easily make your living spaces beautiful even on restricted funds," exclaims architect and interior decorator Michelle Dizon-Legarda of Architectural Designs Plus (tels. 6334311-13). She has firsthand experience in this department of course.

Four years ago, she built an eye-catching red, modern duplex for her and her sister Yvette. "The lot area was 600 sq m that we divided equally," she explains. "I was looking at the color chart, wanting to veer away from the conventional white and yellow exterior finish. I chanced upon this shade of red and asked my dad and my sister if they liked it. They both agreed and the rest is history! Our neighbors would visit the construction site. They would come inside and comment on

INDUSTRIAL C6

UNCAGED exterior and wide aluminum doors and steel windows are used to form clear and simple lines.

Industrial management

From page D1

what they saw. They said they'd build a house just like ours when they move to another village."

Dixon Legarda has made full use of her 600 sq m floor space by using split leveling. A great believer in multi-functionality, the garage doubles as a play area for her children, nieces and nephews as well as a site for their parties. Her creativity has led her to turn inexpensive items and ones from into works of art.

"The legs of my dining table are actually part of a La Union gillnet," she says. I had the glass and metal top made by GK Linos and asked him to keep the rust in for character. Her ground floor is true to its industrial look with the use of polished concrete bound by metal flat bars.

"They were inexpensive to use and maintain. Also, I like the rustic look," she explains. Also cheap and decor for the personal touch plants sold at a junk shop for P25 a piece, hair pearl bulbs on recycled and the botanic doors that are a constant theme in the house.

"The industrial look allows you to forego covering your ceiling. My insulation, materials are exposed. To economize and yet get a great look, I used plastic on my walls and moisture-proofed them with an acrylic finish," Dixon Legarda continues. "I would advise people intent to skimp on the structural, plumbing and electrical aspects of their home. With the modern industrial look, you can realize savings because of the deconstructed theme that is prevalent in these types of homes." Dixon Legarda used local (Montessori) tiles for her kitchen and simple granite for her bathroom.

The industrial look, however, has not prevented her from showcasing her collection of artworks from local masters such as Hernando and H.R. Ocampo. A beautiful Hernando, for instance, rests on the living room wall. "It came out on the cover of Reader's Digest," she shares.

There are whimsical objects in the house that give it a homey feel. Blacksmiths are used in place of vases for the children's room. The master bed in the master's quarters is one designed by Dixon Legarda herself. "Mr. Interior owners are my bedroom and the kids' room. In the bathroom I find the most privacy. It is roomy with natural light and sometimes pass to nature," she says.

"This may not be the last house that I will live in but it is a lovely house and we are very happy here. Industrial as it may look, this house is also very Asian (sliding doors on everywhere and allow for changes in room use). My next house will probably be a bigger project in underlake but will, time to time, be industrial in design."

HUGELH of Modern Art planter-cast hood mold vervex in Stone hobbies

AT HOME with Michelle Dixon Legarda

LAVAVIT material for shower and old tangub's planks mixed with granite for counter tops in the bathroom. Glass and metal are tacked to the walls. Uniquely shaped water basin had the perfect dimensions to slip into the narrow counter.

DINING room's door-type aluminum frames, while steel casements are used for windows. Metal, glass and wood table are all disengaged parts of other objects. Tanguile floor wood was bought from a cracked monster heater for P25 a piece.

ADELAVE bed was specially made by Michelle. Aluminum windows and soft rattop blinds are on either side of the bed.

LIVING room elements are simple. Cement flooring and aluminum framed picture windows with quarter-inch glass were used.

BIGGEST painting on the living room wall is a prized Manansala that once appeared on the cover of Readers Digest.

ANTIQUITIES ON SALE

Container-old pots recovered from sunken Spanish ships are among the offerings of Meta Casa de Arteza Antiques, a top art and antique dealer in Southeast Asia, at the 11th Telecommunications Show booth-to-mark with the 3rd Korea in Focus, ongoing till July 17 at the Greenhills Shopping Complex. The 24-day trade fair organized by Prime Asia Trade Planners Convention Organizers showcases exotic products and goods.

Seminar on Zen garden-making

PLANT or caper? Serapion S. Motilla will conduct a seminar on miniature Zen gardens 8 a.m.-4 p.m., July 13-15, Mott's Plant Art, King Louis Garden Center, Manila Sterling Bank, cor. Edsa and Quezon Avenue, QC.

Mini waterfall Zen garden, bits covered by Buddhist monks in the 11th century combines the traditional elements of bonsai-ts, water, rocks and plants. It is designed to be a venue for meditation, promoting peace and tranquility.

A minimum fee will be charged for all the materials to be used. Each participant will be provided with sand, cement, volcanic rocks, mortar pump, hoes, assorted plants, moss, paint, mini trucks, two bamboo and a certificate of completion.

Registration is now open on a first-come, first-serve basis at Mott's Plant Art. Call 9094555.

WOW to demand as living piece of art is this mini waterfall Zen garden with rich green bonsai and other plants.